









A REPLY

TO

AN ATTACK MADE BY

ONE OF WHISTLER'S BIOGRAPHERS

ON

A PUPIL OF WHISTLER

MR. WALTER GREAVES

AND

HIS WORKS

BY

WILLIAM MARCHANT & CO.

THE GOUPIL GALLERY

5 REGENT STREET

LONDON,

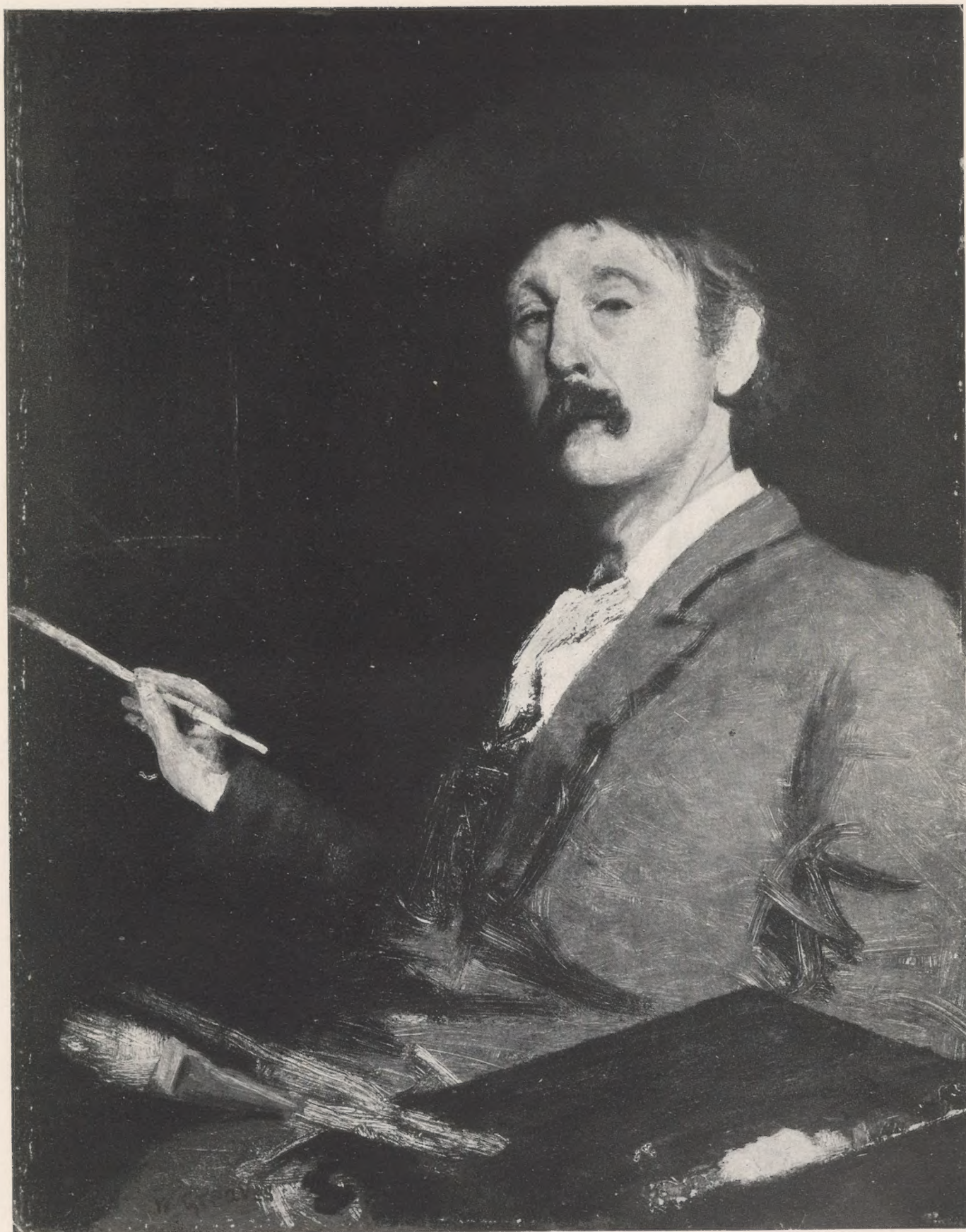
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PORTRAIT OF MR. WALTER GREAVES  
By Himself

*Catalogue No. 37*



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"Experts and connoisseurs often differ violently in their opinions of particular pictures, and their judgments are often based on diverse principles."

"The Times," *October 5, 1911.*



## Prefatory Statement.

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DURING the month of May last, we held, in our Galleries, an exhibition of early paintings and etchings by

Mr. WALTER GREAVES,  
PUPIL OF WHISTLER,

whose works were, previously, unknown to the world of Art.

Mr. Joseph Pennell was apparently persuaded that certain art critics (unnamed), in reviewing the exhibition, had seriously jeopardised Whistler's fame by drawing false and adverse conclusions from an erroneous date contained in the Preface to the Catalogue.

He therefore ostensibly set out on the laudable mission of safeguarding the artistic reputation of the master.

Unfortunately, however, Mr. Pennell's *defence* of Whistler soon resolved itself into an *attack* on Mr. Greaves and his works, in the course of which he made certain statements—especially with reference to some of the exhibits—which, owing to the publicity they received, caused deep offence and prejudice to Mr. Greaves, as also no small amount of annoyance and injury to ourselves.

It would be impossible to allow these statements to remain unchallenged, lest the public be thereby led to construe silence into acquiescence, and to consider Mr. Pennell's assertions as accepted facts.



We have therefore felt compelled to issue this refutation ;  
and, in view of the interests seriously involved—Whistler's  
no less than Mr. Greaves's and our own—we have deemed it  
essential to treat the whole question in as comprehensive  
and exhaustive a manner as possible.

WILLIAM MARCHANT & CO.

THE GOUPIL GALLERY,  
LONDON.

*November, 1911.*



## CHAPTER I.

### THE EXHIBITION—THE PREFACE TO THE CATALOGUE— "THE TIMES" ARTICLE.

When we first came into possession of the pictures which formed our recent Greaves Exhibition, we did not know Mr. Walter Greaves personally, nor were we certain that all the works came from his hand.

For various reasons, however, which have subsequently been fully justified, we decided, in principle, upon holding the exhibition. We therefore sought out Mr. Greaves and, without at first disclosing our intentions, asked him if he would come and inspect a certain number of paintings we held, several of which bore his name. He readily consented, examined them, and told us they were all executed by him, at the same time expressing his pleasure at their satisfactory appearance.

It may be important to state that, when Mr. Greaves parted with his canvases, some time before they came into our hands, they were minus their stretchers and, generally speaking, in so dirty and neglected a state as to bear full evidence of having been stowed away, in cellar or lumber-room, for twenty or thirty years, if not more. So little care had been taken of them, that several had to be relined before they could be stretched, and many of them required the restorer's attention, the work being done under our personal supervision.

We subsequently told Mr. Greaves that we were going to hold an exhibition of these works, and, although he had no longer any claim on them, we promised that, should the exhibition prove successful, we would make a return to him from the proceeds.



Whilst passing his pictures in review, Mr. Greaves gave us many items of interesting information, some of which were, at our request and with his consent, embodied in the form of a letter from himself to us, and published as a preface to the catalogue. As will be seen, we subsequently withdrew this preface, but for the purposes of this brochure it is necessary to reproduce it at length:—

The earliest picture in your possession, as you will probably have surmised, is the Hammersmith Bridge on Boat Race day, which I painted when I was about sixteen, namely, before I knew Whistler, whose acquaintance I made in the late fifties. We lived at No. 10 Lindsey Row, and Whistler at No. 7, and afterwards at No. 3\*, and he used to say to my sisters, 'You are the pride of one end of the Row, and I am the pride of the other.' Our families became very intimate, and my brother Henry and I worked under and for Whistler for close on twenty years. It was at Lindsey Row that he painted such important works as the portraits of his Mother, Carlyle, the Leylands, Miss Alexander (my sisters made the carpet of black and white tape which Whistler used when painting this portrait), the Little White Girl, the Japanese series, the Thames and Cremorne nocturnes, and, in addition, produced his Thames and other etchings of that period. We used to get ready his colours and canvases, prepare the grey distemper ground which he so liked working upon, and painted the mackerel-back pattern on the frames—in fact, we attended to all the routine work of the studio. I was working with him on the Leyland Room and painted part of the ceiling, finding for him at Freeman's, in Battersea, the verdigris blue used for the screen. Whistler was thoroughly enchanted with it, though I told him that, in my opinion, it would not stand.

My father being a boat builder at Chelsea, we boys were constantly rowing Whistler about, sometimes spending the whole night on the water. In summer most of our evenings were spent at Cremorne Gardens where we made our sketches on brown paper, to use them during the day for our pictures and etchings.

Before we knew Whistler, my brother and I were painting pictures of the Thames and Cremorne Gardens, both day and night effects, but we had been so accustomed to fill our pictures with numerous details that, when we came under Whistler's influence and teaching, his ideas naturally appeared to us strange at first, and difficult to carry out. It was Whistler who taught me to etch, and he would often take the needle from me and correct or touch up my work.

The picture of barges passing under the bridge (No. 47) was exhibited during the Great Exhibition of 1862, in Allen Cole's

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\* This should have been No. 2. Whistler's mother headed some of her correspondence "*2 Lindsey Houses.*"



room, in the Cromwell Road building—the room containing Whistler's pictures. It was afterwards that Whistler painted his picture of the bridge, which now belongs to the Nation, treating the subject in a less conventional and more artistic manner. Both the upright moonlight pictures (Nos. 41 and 71) were done from Whistler's window in Lindsey Row.

Carlyle was a friend of our family, but it was only after Whistler had finished his portrait of him that I painted the one you have, so that I had to be content with sittings for the head only. Whistler, however, interested himself in the work and helped me very much with advice. When the portrait was completed he expressed himself quite satisfied with the result.

The large portrait of my sister 'Tinnie' in the black and white fancy dress, was exhibited at the Royal Aquarium in 1876—an Exhibition opened by the Duke of Edinburgh. Whistler tried to get it in at the Grosvenor Gallery, but it was not hung for want of space. Some of the other pictures may have been exhibited in different places, but I have no actual records of this. I may mention that Whistler would never allow us to exhibit anything without his permission, and always insisted on our mentioning that we were 'pupils of Whistler.'

WALTER GREAVES.

\* \* Notes on the Greaves Brothers can be found in Mr. and Mrs. Pennell's book, "*The Life of James McNeill Whistler.*"

The Private View of the Exhibition was held on Thursday, May 4th, but very few people, including at most three or four art critics, responded to our invitations to inspect the works of Walter Greaves, pupil of Whistler.

The next morning, however, *The Times* contained the following appreciative article, which, with the Editor's courteous sanction, we reprint in its entirety:—

### An Unknown Master.

#### EXHIBITION AT THE GOUPIL GALLERY.

Mr. Walter Greaves, in the catalogue of his pictures now to be seen at the Goupil Gallery, 5, Regent-street, describes himself as a pupil of Whistler. He tells us, in the short and simple account of himself at the beginning of that catalogue, that Whistler always insisted upon his describing himself so, and would not allow him to exhibit anything without his permission. Yet the fact remained that Mr. Greaves, though some of his pictures have a remarkable likeness to Whistler's, and were evidently influenced by him, is a perfectly original artist. We



understand that he is an old man, and has lived and painted in London for most of his life. That being so, his obscurity is inexplicable. For he is not an artist who has produced one or two fine works, as it were, by chance. There are 50 paintings of his in the exhibition, and scarcely one of them is not remarkable.

At first sight one is struck by their likeness to Whistler's work, and at the same time puzzled by their underlying originality. But soon this originality asserts itself, and the Whistler influence seems to be a mere accident. Mr. Greaves tells us that his "Boat Race Day, Hammersmith Bridge" (No. 68), was painted when he was 16; and, surely, no artist at that age has ever painted a more original picture. If it were exhibited without any history attached to it, it would be called Post-Impressionist. The figures crowded on the Bridge are painted with a primitive *naïveté*, yet they are all subordinated to the main design, while at the same time they preserve their character and propriety of pose and gesture. This *naïveté* persists in nearly all his work, and distinguishes it sharply from Whistler's cosmopolitan cleverness. Mr. Greaves tells us that his father was a boat-builder at Chelsea. He has, therefore, been familiar with the riverside from childhood, and his pictures of it seem to be rich with childish associations. He paints it as if he loved it for its own sake, not as if it were a new and interesting material for picture-making. No one has ever surpassed him in the drawing of boats, and he draws them as if they were human to him. Every house in his riverside pictures has its own character; and yet in most of his works the detail is almost as skilfully subordinated as in the best works of de Hoogh; and, as de Hoogh is intensely Dutch, so Mr. Greaves is intensely English. Whistler, no doubt, helped to make him an artist, but he did not make him a cosmopolitan like so many of his followers, and he has kept almost entirely free of the Japanese element in Whistler's art.

He is at his best, perhaps, in works like the wonderful little night-piece, "The Black Lion, Church Street, Chelsea" (No. 38), where there is nothing of Whistler. Here the houses all keep their character and sharpness of definition in the darkness. The execution and the composition alike are almost childish in their simplicity. The picture looks as if anyone could have painted it, and yet no one has painted anything at all like it. There are three pictures of Old Battersea Bridge; and the longer you look at them the less you remember Whistler. Indeed, they have the same relation to Whistler's works that the Giorgionesque Titian has to Giorgione. Whistler defines only for the sake of his design. Mr. Greaves defines because he loves every timber in the bridge; and yet his design is almost as fine as Whistler's and almost as predominant. He is not a painter of moods, like Whistler, but a painter of things in which he is profoundly interested, like de Hoogh. Whistler has taught him some part of the science of picture-making, and that is all. In



his portrait of Carlyle the influence of Whistler is evident ; but notice the subtlety of expression and the manner in which he has invested the trousers with character—perhaps the most difficult feat an artist can accomplish. Again, in the portrait of Miss Alice Greaves the head is a master-piece, and there is extraordinary boldness in the whole design, though the quilted dress is a little tiresome in its repetitions. Mr. Greaves tells us that it was rejected at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1876 for want of space. There are very few contemporary exhibitions in which it would not surpass every other portrait. If the Academy have not yet made all their purchases this year for the Chantrey Bequest, they have an opportunity here of making some reparation for the long public neglect, or rather ignorance, of a master, on whose discovery Mr. Marchant is to be congratulated.

The success of the exhibition was immediately assured. By mid-day the galleries were thronged, and these very pictures by Mr. Greaves, which hitherto had been unknown to the art world, were now eagerly sought after, even by some of the most discriminating connoisseurs.

As the day went on, the excitement increased, reporters from the principal papers vying with each other to obtain interviews with, and photographs of, the artist; whilst crowds of visitors continued to stream through the galleries, expressing, together with their appreciation of the pictures, their great surprise that the author of such works could have remained hitherto unknown to the public. And so, throughout, the interest in the exhibition was maintained to the very last day; whilst had we needed any justification, from the artistic side, for exhibiting Mr. Greaves's works, it was amply afforded in the high commendation and eulogistic opinions passed on them by some of the most distinguished artists of the present day. We may quote, as an example, the following from *The Daily News* of May 6th:—

#### AN ARTIST'S APPRECIATION.

A remarkable feature of the discovery is the whole-hearted admiration expressed by the younger men of the art world, who, feeling that the veteran artist will not produce many more pictures, are working to secure a record attendance at the Goupil Gallery, and have hopes that at least one of the canvases may be secured for a public collection.



One eminent pupil of Whistler, Mr. William Rothenstein, speaking to a "Daily News" representative last night, said it seemed incredible that a man of Mr. Greaves's talents should have remained unappreciated so long.

"An entirely new note runs through all his pictures. He was known to some of us as a kind of legend, the subject of many Whistler stories, but we had perhaps rather regarded him merely as a follower of the master.

"Everything he has painted is the result of a rare passion and reverence, and there underlies everything he does a spirit of rare intensity, which is curiously suggestive of the early works of the Pre-Raphaelites. I think nothing quite like the portrait of his sister has been painted in England, and I hope that one or more of his fine pictures will find a home in the Tate Gallery."

Mr. Rothenstein's generous appreciation of the new master's work is shared by the critics. Mr. Greaves has found fame late in life, but he has received an enthusiastic welcome from the world of art.

As it would be impossible, by means of excerpts, to give an adequate idea of Mr. Walter Sickert's sincere and admirable tribute to Mr. Greaves's work, published, under the title of *L'Affaire Greaves*, in the *New Age* of June 15th, we have, with the Editor's kind approval, reprinted the article in its entirety, as a most fitting conclusion to these pages.







"PASSING UNDER OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE

By Walter Greaves

*Catalogue No. 47*







## CHAPTER II.

MR. PENNELL'S MOVE — LETTERS TO "THE TIMES":  
MR. HEINEMANN, THE WRITER OF "THE TIMES" ARTICLE,  
AND W. M. & CO.

On May 13th, Mr. Joseph Pennell informed us that he had thoroughly searched through the Official Catalogue of the 1862 International Exhibition, but had failed to find any trace, either of Mr. Greaves's picture, or even of his name; that, further, Whistler was catalogued as having exhibited four etchings, but no pictures. He said it was a most serious affair, and that Mr. Greaves would have to substantiate his statement concerning No. 47 "Passing under Old Battersea Bridge." We replied that we ourselves would investigate the matter, and that, if any mistake had been made, it should forthwith be rectified; but that unfortunately our principal was obliged to go abroad the next day for about a week.

Now Mr. Pennell, from the outset, had appeared very excited, if not angry, discussing matters, both in the exhibition and out of it, with critics, artists, and even dealers; his activity being sufficiently surprising to become the subject of very general talk and speculation. His attitude on this occasion seemed so ominous, not to say antagonistic, that it occurred to us to ask him what he intended to do. He replied that he would "do nothing" until our principal returned to London; but three days afterwards—owing, so he informed us later, to the "most scandalous attacks" which meanwhile had been made upon Whistler—he could not refrain from sending to *The Times* the letter which is reprinted on page 23, although *The Times* itself refrained from publishing it.

As the picture "Passing under Old Battersea Bridge" was not even referred to in *The Times* article, one may easily imagine the Editor's possible amazement at being called upon by Mr. Pennell to ask Mr. Greaves,

"to produce some more positive proof, and reliable data, as to the date at which this work was shown."



The letter was returned, according to Mr. Pennell (and apparently to his surprise), "without comment or explanation."

On May 24th, we obtained our own evidence that it was not in the International Exhibition of 1862, but in that of 1873, the next of the series, that Mr. Greaves's picture was shown.

His memory had evidently been at fault, and the error, made absolutely in good faith (which even Mr. Pennell has allowed), was quite pardonable, as we think anyone will admit. Still, like all errors, it was a regrettable one, and, the next day, in consequence of it, we withdrew the preface from our catalogue.

Mr. Pennell, however, had seemingly determined to act independently of us, for *The Times* of May 26th contained this letter from Mr. William Heinemann, which was based mainly on information which Mr. Pennell—in his published letters—declared was either supplied to, or obtained by, himself.

#### WHISTLER AND MR. GREAVES.

To the Editor of *The Times*.

SIR,—The sensation created by the exhibition of Mr. Walter Greaves's pictures is due to the impression given, and reproduced by the Press, that he was not merely, as he describes himself, a "pupil of Whistler," but that he actually influenced and, in some directions, led Whistler. This impression has arisen out of the letter which Messrs. Goupil have printed as a preface to the catalogue. I gather that Mr. Greaves is an old gentleman, and I fear that his memory has played him false with regard to the dates he mentions in this letter. As these dates have led to quite an erroneous impression, I think it is important that they should be corrected.

(1) Mr. Greaves states that he and his brother painted, before they knew Whistler, "pictures of the Thames and Cremorne Gardens, both day and night effects." The following extract from a letter written by Whistler to Mr. Greaves disposes of that impression:—

"Suppose you were to see any other fellow doing my moonlights, how vexed you would be. You see I *invented* them. Never in the history of art have they been done. Well, nothing more natural than that you two should do them, and quite right that the traditions of the studio should go on through the pupils\* . . .

"J. A. M'N. WHISTLER."

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\* In the same letter, Whistler referred to Mr. Greaves as his *own pet pupil*.

(2) Mr. Greaves says that "the picture of barges passing under the bridge (No. 47) was exhibited during the Great Exhibition of 1862, in Allen (*sic*) Cole's room." That impression is disposed of by the fact that in 1862 Mr. Alan Cole was only fourteen years of age, and also by the following statement:—

"In the 1862 Exhibition, the buildings of which lay along the Cromwell-road, Greaves had no picture.

"In 1873 Jimmy asked that a painting by Greaves should be shown in one of my rooms. Jimmy sent 'Nocturne in Grey and Gold,' which I believe was 'Battersea Bridge,' now in the Tate Gallery, and Mr. Greaves sent a 'Harmony in Blue and Grey.'\* Both are in the Catalogue for that year.

"In 1874 Jimmy sent nothing and asked me to take in a Greaves painting. This was a 'Harmony in White and Grey,' by H. Greaves. "ALAN S. COLE."

(3) Mr. Greaves says that Whistler's Thames etchings were produced when he lived at Lindsey Row; but most of them are dated 1859—two or three years before he went there.

It is clear, therefore, that his memory has played Mr. Greaves false, and critics will be able to correct their impression of the relative position of Mr. Whistler and Mr. Greaves, which is abundantly shown by the two extracts given above. I feel certain that Mr. Greaves has no desire to mislead, or to claim for himself greater distinction than the fact that he was a pupil of Whistler's.

In the first edition of the catalogue the dates are given for three of the Thames-Cremorne pictures. As these dates are omitted from the third edition, I assume that Mr. Greaves has already become aware of his mistakes. He should, I think, in these circumstances, now modify as well the misleading statements in his introductory letter.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WM. HEINEMANN.

21 Bedford Street, W.C., May 24th.

Then followed this correspondence:—

"The Times," May 27th, 1911.

(From the Writer of "The Times" Article.)

### WHISTLER AND MR. GREAVES.

To the Editor of *The Times*.

SIR,—Mr. Heinemann in his letter to you on this subject says that "the sensation created by the exhibition of Mr. Walter Greaves's pictures is due to the impression given and reproduced by the Press . . . that he actually influenced and in some directions led Whistler." I can scarcely believe that the public were so foolish as to admire and to buy pictures because of their

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\* The exact title in the official catalogue is "Harmony in Blue Grey."



supposed influence upon other pictures; at any rate I should like to point out that Mr. Greaves was praised in *The Times*, not because of the likeness of his works to Whistler's, but because of their unlikeness. They seemed to me most interesting when they were most original; and I said so. As Whistler obviously painted Whistlerian pictures better than Mr. Greaves, his originality is not likely to be questioned by any man of sense. No doubt Whistler did "invent his moonlights" as he put it; but even if he had not invented them, their excellence makes them his. A masterpiece is the work of the man who made it, no matter what he may have learnt from others. But while the dates of Mr. Greaves's pictures have nothing to do with the merits of Whistler, they have also nothing to do with the merits of Mr. Greaves; for, as I have said, his best pictures are not Whistlerian, and Mr. Heinemann does him an injustice in suggesting that his success is altogether based upon a misconception. I, for one, should have thought more highly of his art if his most Whistlerian pictures had not been exhibited.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THE WRITER OF THE NOTICE OF

MR. GREAVES'S PICTURES IN *The Times*.

To the Editor of *The Times*.

(From W. M. & Co.)

SIR,—We have read Mr. Heinemann's letter in *The Times* of to-day. May we, as being on the spot, give it as our impression that the sensation created by the exhibition of Mr. Walter Greaves's pictures is primarily due to the attention called to it by *The Times* article of the 5th inst., which certainly contains no suggestion that Mr. Greaves "actually influenced and, in some directions, led Whistler"?

During the preparation of the exhibition, Mr. Greaves gave us several items of interesting information, some of which, with his consent, were taken down, signed by him, and incorporated in our catalogue in the form of a letter to the firm. Mr. Greaves spoke to us very simply, and sincerely, and the necessity to corroborate his statements by documentary evidence, before printing them, did not occur to us.

Yesterday, however, we withdrew the preface in its entirety from the catalogue, having received evidence that Mr. Greaves was at fault as to the date of exhibition of the picture, "Passing under Old Battersea Bridge." The official catalogue of the Great Exhibition of 1862, Fine Art Department, contained no mention of any work by Mr. Walter Greaves, but the popular edition of the catalogue of the London International Exhibition of 1873 contains, on page 63, the following:—

"1556. Whistler, J. A. McNeill.

"'Nocturne in Grey and Gold.'

"1558. Greaves, W.

"'Harmony in Blue Grey.'"

Whilst, therefore, Mr. Greaves's statements with regard to the picture are materially correct, there is an important variation as to the date of its exhibition, and if any erroneous superstructure has been built by anyone on this mistake, it must of course fall to the ground.

Mr. Heinemann quotes an extract from one of Whistler's letters, in which Whistler states that he invented his "Moonlights," bringing this forward in order to contradict Mr. Greaves's statement that his brother and he "were painting pictures of the Thames and Cremorne Gardens, both day and night effects," before they knew Whistler. Mr. Greaves authorizes us to repudiate, on his behalf, that he in any way wished to convey the idea that he and his brother invented Whistler's manner of painting moonlights; and it is difficult to see how his words could be made to convey that meaning, any more than Whistler's assertion that he was the inventor of his own moonlights definitely indicated that no one before him had ever painted a moonlight picture.

But what led up in the letter to those remarks?

Mr. Alan S. Cole says that the picture which Whistler sent to the 1873 exhibition, under the title "Nocturne in Grey and Gold," was, in his belief, "Battersea Bridge," now in the Tate Gallery. Mr. Greaves had previously given us not only the exact title under which, at Whistler's desire, his picture was exhibited, but also described, as a moonlight on Southampton Water, the picture by Whistler simultaneously exhibited. Those who can remember an oblong picture by Whistler, representing a golden moon rising in a greyish sky from an expanse of grey water, will perhaps consider it as more entitled to be called "Nocturne in Grey and Gold" than the upright Tate Gallery picture which figured in the Goupil Gallery exhibition of 1892, under the title, given by the artist himself, "Nocturne—Blue and Gold—Old Battersea Bridge."

Whatever fault may be found with Mr. Greaves on the subject of his forgetfulness of dates relating to matters of 40 or 50 years ago, Mr. Heinemann is perfectly right in feeling "certain that Mr. Greaves has no desire to mislead, or to claim for himself greater distinction than the fact that he was a pupil of Whistler's."

As showing, however, that "to err is human," we may point out that Mr. Heinemann himself, in a matter of the present day, has, in referring to our catalogue as that of "Messrs. Goupil," evidently trusted to his memory alone, and not sought the necessary documentary evidence. This mistake is, unfortunately, a very serious one, from our point of view, and we are bound to see that it is rectified without delay, lest through Mr. Heinemann's *faute de mémoire* the impression might be "given and reproduced by the Press" that we are making an illegal use of the name Goupil, which might easily cause us another heavy and intricate law suit. We, therefore, emphatically state that nothing in our



catalogues or printed documents could lead anyone to suppose that we are Messrs. Goupil.

We are, on the contrary,

Your obedient servants,

WILLIAM MARCHANT & Co.

The Goupil Gallery, 5, Regent Street, S.W.,  
May 26th.

"The Times," May 29th, 1911.

(From Mr. Heinemann.)

To the Editor of *The Times*.

Sir,—“The Writer of the Notice of Mr. Greaves’s pictures in *The Times*” in his letter (*The Times*, May 27, 1911) credits me, it seems, with the intention of belittling Mr. Greaves’s success, and thinks that I have “suggested that his success is altogether based upon a misconception.” I would ask him to read again more carefully my letter in *The Times* of May 26, and convince himself that I have nowhere referred to Mr. Greaves’s merits as an artist or to the quality of his pictures. I am glad, moreover, that he has found the appreciation which I am convinced he deserves. My letter of the 24th inst. was written for the sole purpose—a welcome one, I should have thought, to any critic—of correcting certain mistakes with regard to dates, which, though innocently made, led some of the critics to conclude—equally innocently—that, as I said, “Greaves influenced and in some directions led Whistler.” These conclusions fail when the dates are rectified, and my object is achieved since “history is put right.” It is also agreeable to see how readily Messrs. William Marchant and Co. assist in this by withdrawing from the catalogue not only the erroneous dates given to some of the pictures, but also the introductory letter which I ventured to object to.

Messrs. William Marchant & Co. are less fortunate in their attempt to correct Mr. Alan S. Cole’s conjecture that the “Nocturne in Grey and Gold,” exhibited in the London International Exhibition of 1873, was probably the picture of Battersea Bridge now in the Tate Gallery. They suggest that it is more probably the picture of “Moonlight on Southampton Water,” which was first exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery of 1882, nine years after the London International Exhibition, and which was undoubtedly painted in the fall of 1881, when Whistler returned from Jersey and saw the moon rise at Southampton.

On the other hand, I must plead guilty for having referred erroneously to “Messrs. Goupil” when I should have referred to “The Goupil Gallery” or to “Messrs. William Marchant & Co.” *Peccavi!* and all apologies to Messrs. William Marchant

& Co., Messrs. Goupil & Co., and the Goupil Gallery, severally and collectively.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WM. HEINEMANN.

21, Bedford Street, W.C., May 27.

One might reasonably have supposed that, all necessary corrections having thus been publicly made, the matter had been finally and satisfactorily settled. Mr. Heinemann must have thought so when he wrote:—

“ My object is achieved since ‘ history is put right,’ ”

and that such was the impression produced by the above correspondence, is shown by this fairly accurate summing-up of the situation in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of May 27th:—

Four years ago, in reviewing Mr. Pennell's *Life of Whistler*, we remarked that no incense could be more grateful or appropriate to the Elysian shade of that illustrious fighter than the dust of controversy about him and his work. On that principle alone, apart from his method and manner, Mr. Walter Greaves approves himself a loyal pupil, for he is stirring the vortex of art criticism to its depths. Instead of allowing for the hazy recollection of a septuagenarian, and apportioning his share of credit on judicial lines, certain rash enthusiasts have stuck the cart before the horse and reversed the positions of the pupil and the master, which is absurd. Whatever happens we hope that nothing will move Mr. Greaves from the position he took up from the first when he proclaimed on the title-page of the Goupil catalogue that he was a pupil of Whistler, pure and simple.

The publishers of that catalogue now announce a correction so far as its most important date is concerned, and with this admission the worst part of the dispute—the question of precedence—fortunately disappears. We said on the first day of the exhibition that the pictures were interesting, not merely because of certain resemblances to Whistler's work, but also because of departures therefrom; and it is *per se*, and not for any relative reasons, that work like this must be judged, whether the painter is English or foreign, living or dead. There is an assured place in the future for Mr. Greaves in the art of Victorian England, but we feel that his reputation will be all the stronger directly it is stripped of the pathetic fallacy which attaches, very naturally, to a long-neglected master coming tardily and suddenly into his own.

But the discussion was not, by any means, to be allowed to end at this juncture, as we shall see in the following pages.



## CHAPTER III.

MR. PENNELL IN THE ENGLISH PRESS—"THE GREAVES HUMBUG"—  
"THE GREAVES BUBBLE."

Now whether Mr. Pennell considered that Mr. Heinemann's treatment of the matter had been too suave, or that the desired result could not be obtained without sufficient fuss and public commotion—whatever, in fact, may have been his reasons—he was evidently not content to leave the matter solely in the hands of Mr. Heinemann. He therefore started his own press campaign, the true character of which can best be gauged from a perusal of the reprints that follow:—

"The Sunday Times," May 28th, 1911.

(From Mr. Pennell.)

Mr. WALTER GREAVES AND WHISTLER.

To the Editor of *The Sunday Times*.

SIR,—On May 4 an exhibition of the works of Mr. Walter Greaves, pupil of Whistler, was opened at the Goupil Gallery.

On the 5th a long article filled with praise of Greaves as "a most original artist," interspersed with sneers at "Whistler's cosmopolitan cleverness," appeared in *The Times*.

I should have thought this but another example of the "discovery" of a new genius whom to-day the art critics of this country are for ever seeking but never finding.

But there arose from nearly every paper an almost universal pæan of praise of Greaves and condemnation of Whistler as artist and man.

At first I thought it amusing, if contemptible, but soon found it so serious that I addressed the following letter to *The Times*. This, after keeping some days, the editor has now returned me without comment or explanation.

It is as follows:

May 16.

"To the Editor of *The Times*.

"SIR,—As considerable attention has been called in Europe and America to the exhibition of work by Mr. Walter Greaves, and as Mr. Greaves has stated in the prefatory letter in his catalogue that his painting, 'Passing Under Old Battersea Bridge' was exhibited in 1862—the year of the date upon it—and as this statement has been widely quoted by critics, with the object of proving that Mr. Greaves painted Nocturnes before Whistler, and in Whistler's manner, may I state that I have searched the Official Catalogue, Fine Art Department, of the 1862 International Exhibition at South Kensington, and have failed to find the name of Walter Greaves in it. Mr. Greaves's statement also that Whistler showed 'pictures' in the same exhibition is incorrect, though he did show four etchings numbered 2,548 in the British Division of Etching and Engraving.

"Mr. Alan S. Cole, C.B., also informs me that as he was only aged about fourteen at the time, he cannot remember to have been in charge of a room in the Cromwell-road building, in which Mr. Greaves's and Whistler's pictures were shown, as Mr. Greaves states.

"I think, therefore, it is only right that Mr. Greaves should be asked by you, sir, to produce some more positive proof, and reliable data, as to the date at which this work was shown.

"The first reference to Mr. Greaves's exhibiting, I believe, is 1873.—I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

"JOSEPH PENNELL."

In the meantime, I have been able, thanks to the library at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Mr. Alan S. Cole, C.B., to verify every statement in my letter from official records.

Not only this, Mr. Cole informs me that Whistler on two occasions in 1873 and 1874 asked Mr. Cole, who then had charge of two or three rooms containing "Miscellaneous Art," to show Greaves's and his brother's pictures—which he did at South Kensington, but eleven years later than the date Greaves gives.

I have seen a series of letters from Whistler to Greaves in which the artist addresses his pupil in the most affectionate manner, and the letters are filled with advice, encouragement, and offers of help.

Incidentally, these letters, which were shown me by Mr. Greaves himself, were afterwards sold to the bookseller Spencer, who has been so prominent lately in Greaves's affairs.

I have also found that Greaves showed not one, as he says, but four pictures, at the Royal Aquarium in 1876, and Whistler did not protest—but, as Greaves states, "tried to get it in at the Grosvenor."



I have found that between the years 1890 and 1893 H. and W. Greaves, pupils of Whistler, painted, signed and dated nearly one hundred panels in the Streatham Town Hall—most of which are still there, and that these ranged from old masters to Japanese prints (enlarged), and from Nocturnes, dated 1890, which it is impossible for me to distinguish from those dated 1857 and 1858 in the first edition of the Goupil Catalogue, to full length figures like those at Goupil's. Incidentally, Whistler's frames are painted around many of them.

Even then Whistler did not give up Greaves—but saw him at times and told me about him before his death, and the story of Greaves is on record in the ago.

The brothers Greaves and their work have been perfectly well known for years in Chelsea to all but these critics. Ignorant of, or wilfully concealing, these facts, these art critics have united in an attempt to decry the art of James McNeill Whistler, the greatest artist of the Nineteenth Century.—Yours, etc.,

JOSEPH PENNELL.

3, Adelphi Terrace House,  
Robert Street, Strand, W.C.  
May 25.

"The Sunday Times," June 4th, 1911.

(From W. M. & Co.)

To the Editor of *The Sunday Times*.

SIR,—Mr. Joseph Pennell, in the letter from him which you published on the 28th inst., mentioned towards the end "the first edition of the Goupil Catalogue, to full-length figures like those at Goupil's."

This slipshod manner of referring to our catalogue and to our firm is likely to cause us extreme annoyance, if nothing more serious, as the impression may thereby be given, and reproduced in the Press, that we are making an illegal use of the name of Goupil. We have had one lawsuit in connection with the title, "The Goupil Gallery," and do not desire to be unduly dragged into another. We are neither Goupil's nor Goupil and Co., neither do our catalogues, nor any of our firm's printed matter, contain anything which could have given Mr. Pennell or anyone else the slightest justification for using such descriptions.

With reference to the other statements in Mr. Pennell's letter, may we say that, on obtaining evidence ourselves that Mr. Greaves's picture, "Passing under Old Battersea Bridge," was exhibited in Mr. Alan S. Cole's room in the Cromwell-road building in 1873, and not in 1862, as erroneously supposed and stated by Mr. Greaves, we immediately withdrew the prefatory letter in its entirety, as stated in our letter to *The Times*, published on May 27.

Mr. Greaves has never even hinted that he and his brother painted Nocturnes before Whistler in Whistler's manner, but this is what he did say in the prefatory letter:

"Before we knew Whistler my brother and I were painting pictures of the Thames and Cremorne Gardens, both day and night effects, but we had been so accustomed to fill our pictures with numerous details that, when we came under Whistler's influence and teaching, his ideas naturally appeared to us strange at first, and difficult to carry out."

Mr. Greaves also stated:

"The large portrait of my sister 'Tinnie,' in the black-and-white fancy dress, was exhibited at the Royal Aquarium in 1876. . . . Whistler tried to get it in at the Grosvenor Gallery, but it was not hung for want of space. Some of the other pictures may have been exhibited in different places, but I have no actual records of this,"

but Mr. Pennell says:

"I have also found that Greaves showed not one, as he says, but four pictures, at the Royal Aquarium in 1876, and Whistler did not protest, but, as Greaves stated, 'tried to get it in at the Grosvenor.'"

Mr. Greaves did not say that he only showed one picture in 1876, and as the pictures to which he was referring were those in our exhibition, Mr. Pennell's remark seems to be quite beside the point, unless he can authoritatively state that the three other pictures exhibited at the Royal Aquarium in 1876 are now in our exhibition, in which case, will he kindly state which they are? We may further ask, is Mr. Pennell absolutely certain that Whistler "did not protest" against Mr. Greaves exhibiting at the Royal Aquarium in 1876? \*

Yours, etc.,

WILLIAM MARCHANT & CO.

5, Regent Street, Waterloo Place, S.W.

May 31st.

"The Sunday Times," June 11th, 1911.

(From Mr. Pennell.)

To the Editor of *The Sunday Times*.

SIR,—As Messrs. W. Marchant and Co. have referred to my "slipshod manner" of mentioning their catalogue and their firm and have explained in the most precise fashion in your columns just what they want to explain, I need not dwell upon my irrelevant slip.

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\* As a matter of fact, Whistler *did* protest against Mr. Greaves's wish to exhibit at the *Royal Aquarium*, and did not give in without delivering himself of the characteristic remark that "After all, it's only a *fish shop*!"



But in their letter to you they further state that "Walter Greaves has never hinted that he and his brother painted nocturnes before Whistler and in Whistler's manner."

No, Mr. Greaves did not hint—he stated positively in the preface to the catalogue of his show that "Passing Under Old Battersea Bridge" was exhibited in the 1862 Great (International) Exhibition, and this is a nocturne painted in Whistler's manner shown, according to Greaves, years before Whistler had exhibited anything of the sort.\* On the strength of this statement, a large number of "critics"—taking the catalogue as gospel—asserted Greaves painted and showed nocturnes in Whistler's manner years before Whistler painted them, that he was Whistler's master, that—There are columns of it.

A search revealed the fact that Greaves's statement was absolutely incorrect. His memory had played him false. Greaves showed nothing in the 1862 Exhibition.

On Greaves's statement the "critics" of this country built up their falsifications, their fabric collapsed, the critics vanished or have been explaining themselves away.

Messrs. Marchant withdrew the preface to the catalogue, admitting that they or Greaves had made a mistake of eleven years. The show, I believe, has closed and the incident, so far as the Goupil Gallery (I hope I am right this time) is concerned, is over.

Yours, etc.,

JOSEPH PENNELL.

3, Adelphi Terrace House, Robert Street,  
London, W.C. June 4.

Our reply to this last letter was not inserted.

"The Star," May 29th, 1911.

(From Mr. Pennell.)

### WHISTLER'S PUPIL.

To the Editor of *The Star*.

SIR,—On 4 May an exhibition of the works of Mr. Walter Greaves, pupil of Whistler, was opened at the Goupil Gallery.

On the 5th a long article filled with praise of Greaves as a "most original artist," interspersed with sneers at "Whistler's cosmopolitan cleverness," appeared in *The Times*.

I should have thought this but another example of the "discovery" of a new genius, whom to-day the art critics of this country are for ever seeking but never finding.

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\*The date at which Whistler exhibited his works in no way precludes the possibility of their having been executed even long before. The same remark is also applicable to Mr. Greaves. (See page 48.)

But there arose from nearly every paper (the exceptions in London, so far as I have seen, are the *Morning Post*,\* *Westminster*, and *Globe*) an almost universal pæan of praise of Greaves and condemnation of Whistler as artist and man.

I addressed the following letter to *The Times*, which, after keeping some days, the editor has now returned me without comment or explanation :—

(See Mr. Pennell's letter to *The Times*, page 23.)

In the meantime, I have been able, thanks to the library at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Mr. Alan S. Cole, C.B., to verify every statement in my letter from official records. Not only this. Mr. Cole informs me that Whistler on two occasions—in 1873 and 1874—asked Mr. Cole, who then had charge of two or three rooms containing "Miscellaneous Art," to show Greaves's and his brother's pictures—which he did at South Kensington, but 11 years later than the date Greaves gives.

I have found that between the years 1890 and 1893 H. and W. Greaves, pupils of Whistler, painted, signed, and dated nearly 100 panels in the Streatham Town Hall—most of which are still there—and that these ranged from old masters to Japanese prints (enlarged), and from nocturnes, dated 1890, which it is impossible for me to distinguish from those dated 1857 and 1858 in the first edition of the Goupil Catalogue, to full length figures like those at Goupil's.

The Brothers Greaves and their work have been perfectly well known for years in Chelsea to all but these critics. Ignorant of, or wilfully concealing, these facts, these art critics, following *The Times*, have united in an attempt to smirch the memory and decry the art of James McNeill Whistler, the greatest artist of the nineteenth century.—Yours, etc.,

JOSEPH PENNELL.

3, Adelphi Terrace House,  
Robert St., Strand, London, W.C.

A similar letter appeared in *The Art Chronicle* of June 1st, ending with this variation :—

I have also found that Greaves showed not one, as he says, but four pictures, at the Royal Aquarium in 1876, and Whistler did not protest—but, as Greaves states—I hope we may believe this—"tried to get it in at the Grosvenor."

I have found that, between the years 1890 and 1893,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
from Nocturnes, dated 1890, which it is impossible for me to distinguish from those dated 1857 and 1858 in the first edition of the Goupil catalogue, to full length figures like those at Goupil's.

Incidentally, Whistler's frames are painted around many of them. Even then Whistler did not give up Greaves, but saw him

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\* See footnote, page 36.



at times, and told me about him before his death, and the story of Greaves is on record in the authorised life of Whistler published four years ago. This is a partial account of the suppression of the Greaves family by James McNeill Whistler.

The brothers Greaves and their work have been perfectly well known for years in Chelsea to all but these critics. Ignorant of, or wilfully concealing these facts, these art critics, following *The Times*, have united in an attempt to smirch the memory and decry the art of James McNeill Whistler, the greatest artist of the nineteenth century.

The critics of these papers—and those who have copied them in Europe and America—have disgraced their profession and disgraced themselves. In their attempts to belittle Whistler they have only proved that British art criticism of this sort is beneath contempt.—

I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

JOSEPH PENNELL.

"The Star," June 3rd, 1911.

(From W. M. & Co.)

To the Editor of *The Star*.

Sir,—Mr. Joseph Pennell, in the letter from him which you published on the 29th inst. mentioned towards the end:—"the first edition of the Goupil Catalogue, to full-length figures like those at Goupil's."

This slipshod manner of referring to our catalogue and to our firm is likely to cause us extreme annoyance, if nothing more serious, as the impression may thereby be given, and reproduced in the Press, that we are making an illegal use of the name of Goupil. We have had one lawsuit in connection with the title "The Goupil Gallery," and do not desire to be unduly dragged into another. We are neither Goupil's nor Goupil & Co., neither do our catalogues, nor any of our firm's printed matter, contain anything which could have given Mr. Pennell, or anyone else, the slightest justification for using such descriptions. We therefore request you kindly to give this letter the same prominence as you did to that of Mr. Pennell.

With reference to the other statements in Mr. Pennell's letter, may we say that, on obtaining evidence ourselves that Mr. Greaves's picture, "Passing under Old Battersea Bridge," was exhibited in Mr. Alan S. Cole's room in the Cromwell-road building in 1873, and not in 1862, as erroneously supposed and stated by Mr. Greaves, we immediately withdrew the prefatory letter in its entirety—as stated in our letter to *The Times* published on 27 May.

Mr. Greaves has never even hinted that he and his brother painted "Nocturnes" before Whistler in Whistler's manner, but this is what he did say in the prefatory letter:—

"Before we knew Whistler my brother and I were painting pictures of the Thames and Cremorne Gardens, both day and night effects, but we had been so accustomed to fill our pictures with numerous details that, when we came under Whistler's influence and teaching, his ideas naturally appeared to us strange at first, and difficult to carry out."

Mr. Pennell singles out only three London journals—the *Morning Post*, the *Westminster Gazette*, and the *Globe*—as not having joined in the "almost universal pæan of praise of Greaves, and condemnation of Whistler as artist and man." Had Mr. Pennell been a little more thorough in his researches on this point, he would have found other criticisms sufficiently adverse to Mr. Greaves's works to delight the heart of the most violent anti-Greavesite. But even if the only exceptions to the "almost universal pæan" had been the *Morning Post*, the *Westminster Gazette*, and the *Globe*, surely the prestige of these three papers is of the highest, and the opinions of their art critics (and they did not mince matters) should go a long way towards counteracting the effects of the resented blast of praise, especially when it is remembered that they are such eminent art experts as Mr. Robert Ross, Mr. E. Strange, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Mr. Marcus B. Huish, M.A., of the well-known firm of picture dealers and publishers, the Fine Art Society.—Yours etc.,

WILLIAM MARCHANT & Co.

31st May.

By this time, an atmosphere of suspicion and even prejudice had unquestionably begun to gather round Mr. Greaves and his works, but whether resulting or not from Mr. Pennell's writings and sayings we are unable to state. Most extraordinary rumours were also going about, some as absurd and laughable as others were malicious and injurious. We should have thought them all unworthy of notice, but, as we have quite seriously been advised not to let at least some of them pass unheeded, we declare the following reports to be utterly devoid of the slightest truth or foundation :—

*That the collection belonged to certain well-known newspaper proprietors, who were puffing it up in their journals from interested motives.*

*That we had spent a considerable sum of money in "buying" the Press.*



*That some interested person was pulling the wires in order to produce a journalistic boom in the exhibition.*

*That Mr. Walter Greaves was personating some dead artist of the same name, the real author of the pictures.*

*That our reason for withdrawing all the unsold pictures from sale at the end of ten days' exhibition was that we had found out that some of them were painted by Whistler.*

*That the exhibition was a fake (whatever that meant).*

That serious people could be found to countenance and give credit to such figments, may go a certain way towards explaining why three columns of the *Saturday Review* (June 3rd, 1911) were devoted to such an article as:—

### THE GREAVES HUMBUG.

BY ROWLAND STRONG

from which the following are a few chosen sentences:—

"The trouble with Mr. Walter Greaves is that he is, artistically speaking, deaf and dumb and blind."

"... the cold lamb and mint sauce effects in which Mr. Walter Greaves drivels so industriously ..."

"... in obedience perhaps to the misleading counsel of his 'master,' whose own work was technically quite as bad."

"... we again find the pupil up to the eyebrows in the favourite 'sauce verte' of the master."

"... the dilettante American soothsayer whom Mr. Walter Greaves claims as his 'master' ..."

"All Whistler's jugglery is exposed."

"The Portraits of Carlyle and Miss Alice Greaves are among the cruellest pictures that I have ever seen. They constitute the documentary 'give away' of the whole bag of Whistlerian tricks."

The fact is worth noticing, as it throws a curious sidelight on Mr. Pennell's zeal for Whistler's fame, that, whereas *The Times* article (page 11) threw Mr. Pennell into what may here be appropriately described as "cosmopolitan" *perturbations*, the more

than offensive sneers at Whistler, contained in this "Greaves Humbug," did not apparently elicit from him one word of public protest. Possibly, as the article was so satisfactorily damning of Mr. Greaves's work, it was considered more politic to leave well alone—even at the risk of not dragging in Whistler.

The following will close our list of extracts from the English Press :—

"The World," May 30th, 1911.

#### THE GREAVES BUBBLE.

A letter from the publisher of Mr. Pennell's *Life of Whistler* has pricked the Greaves bubble. As I pointed out in this column, the chief interest of Mr. Greaves's pictures turned upon the assertion that certain of them were produced before the similar pictures painted by Whistler. Mr. Greaves's picture of Battersea Bridge at Night was, we were specifically told in the catalogue, exhibited in 1862 in Mr. Cole's room, and if this were true it must have antedated Whistler's picture of the same subject (now in the Tate Gallery) by some years. Mr. Heinemann now informs us that Mr. Cole was only fourteen years of age in 1862, and that the first picture of Mr. Greaves which he exhibited was shown in 1873, the year Whistler's picture now in the Tate Gallery was exhibited. Mr. Greaves was also credited with the assertion that Whistler's Thames etchings were produced when he went to live at Lindsey Row, but Mr. Heinemann now points out that most of these are dated 1859—two or three years before Whistler went to live at Chelsea. It is clear, therefore, that several of the statements made in the catalogue of Mr. Greaves's works are inaccurate, and that the opinions formed by the critics of the relative position of Mr. Greaves and Whistler stand in need of revision. The important letter containing this information was published in *The Times* of last Friday, and, like most of the interesting matter relating to art published in *The Times*, was carefully omitted from the daily index.\*

"The World," June 20th, 1911.

A fortnight ago I referred in this column to Mr. Heinemann's letter which proved that Mr. Marchant had misled us with regard to the date of the exhibition of Mr. Greaves's picture of Battersea Bridge. I said that the letter "pricked the Greaves bubble," meaning that a great deal too much fuss had been made about

\* *The Times* index of Friday, May 26th, 1911, contained, under the heading 'Correspondence,' the following :—

	Page
Whistler and Mr. Greaves (Mr. W. Heinemann) .. .. .	15



Greaves's work. Mr. Marchant has now pointed out to me that there is a latent suggestion of fraud about the word "bubble," and I find that the dictionaries support his contention. I need, perhaps, hardly say that I had not the slightest intention of imputing fraud or dishonesty to Mr. Marchant. The mistake about the date of the exhibition of Mr. Greaves's picture was made, I believe, in all good faith and without any intention of deceiving the public. Mr. Marchant now tells me that although Mr. Greaves's picture was not exhibited till 1872,\* yet the artist still maintains that it was painted before, and not after, Mr. Whistler painted his picture of the same subject now in the Tate Gallery. But perhaps there are only two people in the world who think this question is of much importance, *viz.*, Mr. Greaves himself and Whistler's ardent admirer, Mr. Joseph Pennell. I am quite content to leave them to fight the matter out between themselves.

A. J. FINBERG.

"The World," June 27th, 1911.

(From Mr. Marchant.)

To the Editor of *The World*.

SIR,—I have read Mr. A. J. Finberg's explanation of his use of the word "Bubble" in connection with the Greaves exhibition at the Goupil Gallery.

Nuttall's Standard Dictionary gives, among other meanings, that of "a fraudulent scheme" to the word "Bubble," and I am pleased that Mr. Finberg's dictionaries have shown him that I did not object without good cause. He is not quite correct in saying that Mr. Heinemann's letter "proved that Mr. Marchant had misled us with regard to the date of the exhibition of Mr. Greaves's picture of Battersea Bridge." What I did was to publish in the catalogue Mr. Greaves's statement that the picture was exhibited in 1862. I possibly ought to have examined the official documents before going to press, and should have done so had I entertained at the time the slightest thought that the omission was going to throw Mr. Pennell into a state of what Mr. Walter Sickert, in *The New Age*, has described as "Constantinopolitan perturbations."

However, Mr. Finberg may not only *believe* but rest perfectly *assured* that the error as to the date was made "in all good faith and without any intention of deceiving the public." Even Mr. Pennell has (in an American paper) been kind enough to state that he "exonerates both Mr. Greaves and Mr. Marchant, the director of the Goupil Gallery, from any desire deliberately (*sic*) to deceive the public."

Mr. Finberg is quite right in saying that Mr. Greaves maintains that he painted his picture before Whistler did his of a somewhat similar subject, *i.e.*, the one now in the Tate Gallery.

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\* This should have been 1873, the mistake being Mr. Finberg's.

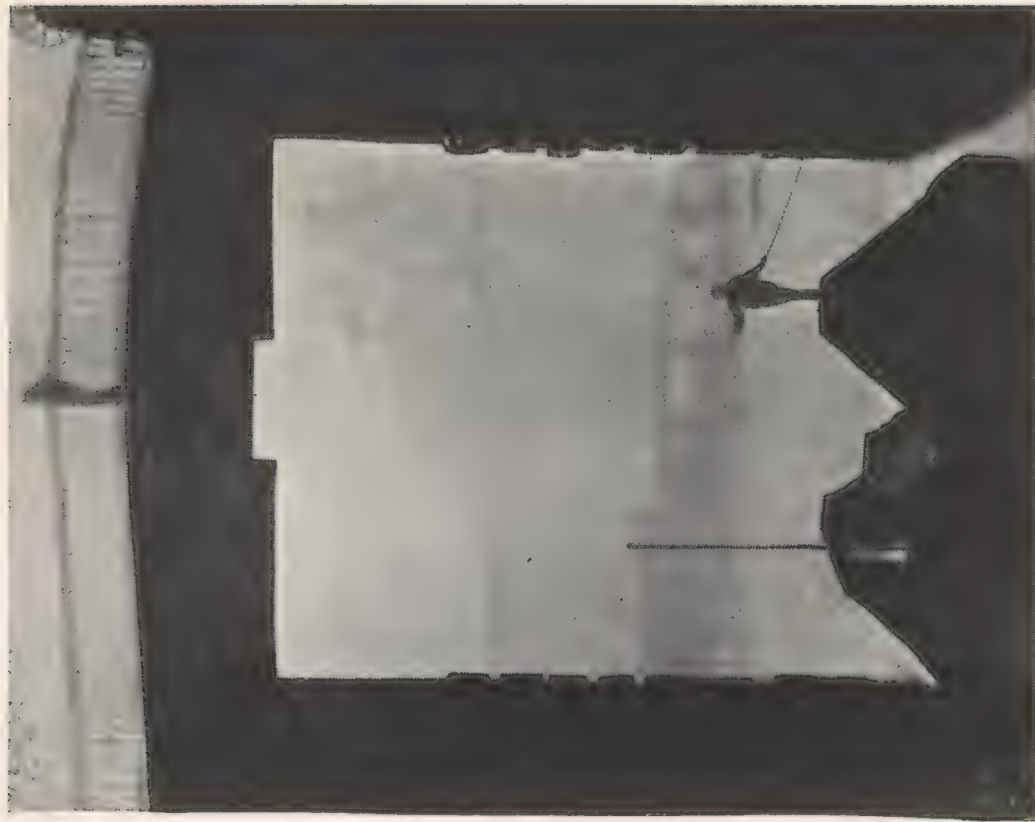
FIG. A



“NOCTURNE—BLUE AND GOLD—OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE”

By J. McNeill Whistler  
*In the Tate Gallery*

FIG. B



“PASSING UNDER OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE”

By Walter Greaves  
*Catalogue No. 47*





"But perhaps," adds Mr. Finberg, "there are only two people in the world who think this question is of much importance, *viz.*, Mr. Greaves himself and Whistler's ardent admirer, Mr. Joseph Pennell." As Mr. Greaves authorises me to say that the question is of no importance to him whatever, Mr. Pennell would thus appear to be left alone in the world "to fight the matter out between" himself.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

W. S. MARCHANT.

The Goupil Gallery, June 21st, 1911.

The letters from Mr. Pennell to the English Press, which we have reproduced in this chapter, are the only ones which, to our knowledge, were published; but we do not wish in any way to convey the idea that he did not send communications on this subject to other journals. Also, if in the next chapter we have only quoted from two American papers, it is because they sufficed to indicate the statements which were emanating from Mr. Pennell, and with these only were we concerned.



## CHAPTER IV.

## MR. PENNELL IN THE AMERICAN PRESS.

For a time we could not imagine what had given rise to some of the rumours and fictions which had obtained currency. We were no longer in doubt, however, when we read the following American articles, which are fully reproduced with the respective Editors' kind authorisations; nor could we help noticing that, when addressing his own countrymen, Mr. Pennell allowed himself a greater freedom of allegation than in his contributions to the English Press :—

"The New York Times," May 24th, 1911.\*

WORKS BY GREAVES SOLD AS  
WHISTLER'S

Portrait Bought by Mr. Freer and Shown at Museum  
Here One of Them, Says Mr. Pennell.

ART SCANDAL THREATENED.

Biographer of Whistler Also Asserts the Master Painted Some  
of the Work Exhibited as Greaves's.

(By Marconi Transatlantic Wireless Telegraph to  
The New York Times).

LONDON, May 23 (by telegraph to Clifden, Ireland; thence  
by wireless.)

Readers of *The New York Times* are familiar with the story of the sudden leap into fame of Walter Greaves, the 70-year-old artist who described himself as a pupil of Whistler, but who is hailed by the London critics as one of the greatest living English painters and a genius from whom Whistler in reality borrowed many of the ideas that most redounded to his (Whistler's) glory.

Mr. Greaves himself was directly responsible for this latter suggestion, for in the catalogue of his works recently placed on exhibition at the Goupil Gallery, it was definitely stated that

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\* An appreciative and lengthy article on Mr. Greaves had appeared in the "New York Times" of May 21st.

Greaves's picture, "Barges Passing Under Battersea Bridge" was painted prior to 1862,\* and that Whistler's similar picture was a work of a later date.

Joseph Pennell, whose life of Whistler, written in collaboration with Elizabeth Robins Pennell, is the standard biography of that artist, has been at pains to investigate this statement, which derives special importance from the fact that the pictures in question are admittedly among the earliest examples of those "nocturnes" which Whistler made a specialty.

Mr. Pennell exonerates both Mr. Greaves and Mr. Marchant, the director of the Goupil Gallery, from any desire deliberately to deceive the public, but he has gathered together documentary evidence to show that the statement made in the catalogue issued by them is erroneous.

The catalogue declares that the Greaves "nocturne" was exhibited during the Great Exhibition of 1862 in Alan Cole's rooms in the Cromwell Road. "It was afterward," so runs the entry in the catalogue, "that Whistler painted his pictures\*\* of the bridge."

Mr. Pennell has obtained from Alan Cole, C.B., whose name Mr. Greaves misspelled "Allen," a letter stating that at the time in question he was 16 years of age.† Mr. Pennell also consulted the catalogue of the exhibition of 1862 and finds that Greaves was not an exhibitor there.

Moreover, Mr. Pennell declares that there is intrinsic evidence that it was Whistler's hand that painted the background of barges which is the chief feature of the Greaves picture of Battersea Bridge. He adds that several other paintings in the Greaves exhibition owe their chief merits to Whistler's brush, instancing the background of one painting entitled "The Balcony," and the head of Greaves in the portrait of himself, supposedly the work of the latter artist. "Whistler began his portrait and Greaves finished it—finished it in more ways than one," said Mr. Pennell succinctly to *The New York Times* correspondent to-day. Mr. Pennell believes that unless steps are at once taken exactly to determine Greaves's place in the world of art there will result confusion between his work and Whistler's which will become an outrageous scandal.

Already, says Mr. Pennell, much of Greaves's work has been foisted upon the public as Whistler's. He cites specifically a portrait said to be by Whistler now in the collection of Charles R. Freer of Detroit, which was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum in New York a year ago.

This portrait, says Mr. Pennell, is not by Whistler but by Greaves.

\* The catalogue contained no such statement, neither was Whistler's picture described therein as "similar."

\*\* The reader will do well to refer to the actual words of the prefatory letter (page 11).

† Mr. Heinemann and Mr. Pennell in their letters to "The Times" gave the age as 14.



'The Nation,' *New York*, June 8th, 1911.

## Art.

### WHISTLER AND GREAVES.

LONDON, May 25.\*

Nothing more extraordinary has happened in London for a long while than the sensation over the show of pictures and prints by Walter Greaves, "Pupil of Whistler," at the Goupil Gallery. By chance, I went to the exhibition on Private View day at the usually crowded hour, that is, if there is a crowd at all. Eight people were in the gallery, and one of these eight was Greaves, one an art critic. The next morning, Friday, *The Times* came out with a long article in large type, proclaiming Greaves a master, comparing his naïveté to Whistler's "cosmopolitan cleverness," and calling upon the Chantrey Bequest to secure one of the masterpieces. That afternoon the gallery was so crowded it was almost impossible to see anything; many of the pictures were sold, disputed for by collectors, artists, and critics; the whole town was talking of the "unknown master"; the authorities were tumbling over each other in their haste to praise the long neglected genius and to belittle Whistler in the process.

At first, the whole affair seemed to me too preposterous to be taken seriously. But the very rumor to which I have just referred shows that it must be taken seriously, and that the facts must be made plain. Everybody knows how difficult it is for the most scientific of scientific critics to decide upon the authorship of pictures painted two or three centuries ago. If the statement that Whistler owed everything to Greaves, that many Whistlers were painted by Greaves, is allowed to go uncontradicted while contemporaries of Whistler are still living, the hopeless confusion in the present, to say nothing of the future, can scarcely be imagined. The critic of the *Morning Post*—who, with the critics of the *Westminster Gazette* and the *Globe*, has managed to keep his head in the midst of the mad hubbub—gave as heading to his notice of the show, "The New Amico of Sandro"; and it was appropriate.†

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\* May 23. Date of Mr. Pennell's interview with the London Correspondent of the "New York Times."

May 24. Date of Mr. Heinemann's letter to "The Times."

May 25. Date of Mr. Pennell's letter to the "Sunday Times."

† The following *extracts* from the article in the *Morning Post* of May 6th, 1911, may perhaps be found quite as useful as the quotation of the *title* only:

"The facile competency of the better craftsman often requires the inspiration of the less accomplished artist. In 'Loading the Barge' there is a deftness and precision in places that improves on Whistler, as Pater improved on Watteau in certain unimportant minutiae. Looking at this picture and at 'Passing under Old Battersea Bridge' (47) you almost believe that the tense individualism of Whistler might

What are the facts? The fabric of nonsense is based largely on a letter from Greaves to the director of the gallery, published in the catalogue. It is full of ignorance or misstatements, and the only charitable explanation is that the old man's memory is completely gone. The most important of the misstatements relates to a picture called *Passing Under Old Battersea Bridge*, obviously derived from Whistler, though the distant sky and water were undoubtedly painted by him, as anyone can see, but at a much later date, and some of the reflections in the river were also put in by Whistler. Of this picture Greaves writes:

It was exhibited during the Great Exhibition of 1862 in Alan Cole's room in the Cromwell Road building—the room containing Whistler's pictures.

"W. Greaves, 62," in very staring letters and figures, is written at the top of the canvas, and it is almost the only picture in the exhibition that is dated. Upon this date the critics have jumped as proof that Greaves is the originator of Whistler's nocturnes, since Whistler did not show a nocturne until several years later. But the statement in the catalogue is absolutely false. Government documents at South Kensington have been supplied to me proving that Walter Greaves did not show this picture, or any other pictures, in the International ("great") Exhibition of 1862; that Whistler showed no pictures there, either; that it was not until 1873 that Walter Greaves exhibited a picture in an exhibition at South Kensington, while Alan Cole, C.B., could have had no room in 1862, as he was then a boy of fourteen. The foundation thus gone, the elaborate structure of misstatements and misrepresentations tumbles to pieces, and nobody of sense can again believe implicitly any statements made by Greaves in his letters or on his pictures, however prepared British critics may be to swallow them wholesale.

And the obscurity of Walter Greaves is purely a myth. From 1873, he exhibited publicly. He has for years been a conspicuous figure in Chelsea, where his work has been shown and sold. In 1890, he and his brother had the sort of chance that

not have prevented him from founding a great school if only he had been less jealous of contemporaries. He would not allow the Greaves to exhibit without his permission."

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"There is much that is inexplicable in this exhibition; there are the pictures we have mentioned and several others which should have brought fame to their painter long ago. 'Boat Race Day, Hammersmith Bridge' (No. 68), said to have been painted when he was only sixteen, suggests that the influence of Whistler was after all a fatal one to Mr. Greaves, who might have become one of the most powerful and original artists of our time."

\* \* \* \* \*

"It is quite possible that apart from these questions being settled the exhibition will secure for the painter a definite niche in the history of English Art, though the niche is not quite so exalted as critics are going to make out for the next few days."



made the fame of the old Italian masters, and that most British artists seek to-day in vain; they were commissioned to decorate Streatham Town Hall, and they worked three solid years on the decoration, producing about a hundred pictures, dated 1891, 1892, and 1893, and signed "H. and W. Greaves, Pupils of Whistler." The pictures which remain are pure Greaves, the uttermost rubbish and banality, though several are copied from Whistler, the designs of whose frames even are *stolen*.<sup>\*</sup> Critics who have been down to Streatham to see them, appalled by this further "discovery," have got out of the difficulty by attributing the worst of the series to Harry Greaves, who is dead and cannot deny it. That the brothers should have signed themselves "Pupils of Whistler" in any of their work is made a reproach against Whistler.<sup>†</sup> But they were his pupils, and he had been trained in France where the younger man holds it a privilege to exhibit as the pupil. Even in England, there have been artists who gloried in calling themselves pupils of Whistler, and in the position they knew it gave them.

But it seems useless to go into these details in the face of the paintings and prints now on the walls of the Goupil Gallery. They are the complete refutation of critics bent, as of old, upon the downfall of Whistler. The work done by Greaves when not under Whistler's influence is commonplace, clumsy, undistinguished. It is impossible that the man who did it could, of himself, have developed the methods and manner of the nocturnes. The work done under Whistler's influence is an echo of Whistler, and in certain instances it is evident that the master worked on the pupil's canvas or copper, as Greaves says. *There is one plate that is at least half done by Whistler and must be added to his work.*<sup>\*</sup> And among the paintings there are a portrait of Greaves and a nocturne from Whistler's window that *look like canvases which Whistler, dissatisfied, had thrown away, only that their fate should be to have Greaves take them up and ruin them.*<sup>\*</sup> It must be explained, however, that Greaves is no fool. In some ways he was an apt pupil. A painting, published as the frontispiece of the Metropolitan Museum catalogue of the Whistler Exhibition last year, owned by Charles L. Freer, and one day possibly to pass into the Washington National Gallery, has every appearance, to judge from the reproduction, of being by Walter Greaves.

I know that already *The Times* has, positively and without giving any reason, refused to publish a letter exposing Greaves's misstatements, though *The Times* is responsible for the sensation based upon them.<sup>‡</sup> The worst of it is, *The Times* is but one of a

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<sup>\*</sup> The italics are ours.

<sup>†</sup> By whom?

<sup>‡</sup> This assertion is simply astounding, if Mr. Pennell's letter to *The Times* (page 23) is the one here referred to, since it only dealt with Mr. Greaves's statement relating to "Passing under Old Battersea Bridge" having been exhibited in 1862, which picture was not so much as mentioned in *The Times* article (page 11).



"THE BALCONY"

By Walter Greaves

*Catalogue No. 41.*





large number of London and provincial papers more or less under the same control.

\* \* \* \* \*

It really seems as if the old enmity against which Whistler struggled had sprung up again. He used to say that the British critics hated him because he was an American, and that, if he had not had the constitution of a government mule, they would have killed him long ago. Whistler was a man to whom nothing happened as to other men, but of the extraordinary incidents that filled his career, this is the most extraordinary of all.

N. N.

We cannot say that, officially, we are aware of the identity of N.N. (were we American journalists, perhaps we might), but we do not think we are far wrong in expressing the opinion that, if the hand is that of N.N., the voice is that of Mr. PeNNell. In fact, so phenomenal is the coincidence both of thought and expression, that, if the statements in the above article are compared with those which Mr. Pennell has made—publicly in his journalistic letters and interview, and verbally to ourselves as herein reported—the difference between them will be seen to be tantamount to that which distinguishes *bonnet blanc* from *blanc bonnet*. For instance, whilst N.N. says:—

“The old man’s memory is completely gone,”

Mr. Pennell’s actual words to us were:—

“The old man must have completely lost his memory.”

If, therefore, for the sake of convenience, we quote N.N.’s statements as texts for our arguments, we feel sure we shall not be doing thereby any injustice to Mr. Pennell; for N.N.’s article simply repeats, in a more or less modified form, all his expressed opinions. Nevertheless, so personal an attack on a living artist should not have appeared without the full signature of the writer.





## CHAPTER V.

## MR. PENNELL'S METHODS OF ANTAGONISM.

Mr. Pennell set out, supposedly, to repel the attacks of certain unnamed English art critics who had

“united in an attempt to smirch the memory and decry the art of James McNeill Whistler, the greatest artist of the nineteenth century,”

and who, together with the European and American critics who “copied them,” had, in the process,

“disgraced their profession and disgraced themselves.”

Mr. Pennell's violent indignation would certainly have been better understood had he, in his letters, but named a few of the influential newspapers whose art critics had joined in this nefarious conspiracy. To have quoted just three or four of their “most scandalous attacks” would have carried more conviction than the most vituperative generalisation.

Judging, however, from the articles which we read, we think that Mr. Pennell's treatment of Mr. Greaves, in his own English and American press campaign, fairly well matched anything “these critics” had said about Whistler, and for which Mr. Pennell slashed at them so vigorously, excepting, of course, the Rowland Strong article. Surely he outstripped them when—utterly disregarding the necessity of adducing the slightest evidence or proof—he boldly declared that certain pictures, which Mr. Greaves had sanctioned our exhibiting as his own works, either were half painted by Whistler, or owed their chief merits to his brush. What could have been the impression left on the mind of the public, as to the honesty of Mr. Greaves as a man, or the value of his works as an artist, by such an entirely unsupported statement?

There had been no public discussion anent the works thus impugned by Mr. Pennell; Mr. Greaves had been neither heard nor even given an opportunity to speak in his own defence, before Mr. Pennell, in his self-appointed capacity of counsel, judge, and jury, gave forth to the world his dogmatic pronouncements.

Frequenterers of the Law Courts are aware of the great freedom permitted to counsel; yet even the latter has his

prescribed limits, as demonstrated by the following remarks of a learned judge, reported in *The Times* of August 1st, 1911:—

“Counsel may say that he will prove or that he has proved that the other party to the litigation is a common thief or a mere swindler. It may be his duty to present that view to the jury if the evidence supports it, but it is a very different thing and grave misconduct of counsel if he, in his statement of facts to the jury, states facts to prejudice the defendant which he does not attempt to prove.”

Yet what else has Mr. Pennell done with reference to Mr. Greaves?

In 1897 Mr. Pennell brought an action for libel against the writer of a certain article, and the Editor of the paper in which it was published, and the matter is treated under the title of “The Lithography Case” in *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*, Vol. II, pages 186 to 192. On page 191 we read:—

“The judge said that a critic might express a most disparaging opinion on an artist’s work and might refer to him in the most disagreeable terms, but he must not attribute to the artist most discreditable conduct, unless he could prove that his charge was true. If the jury thought the criticism merely sharp and exaggerated, they would find a verdict for the defendant, but if not—that is, if it was more than this—they should consider to what damages the plaintiff was entitled. The verdict was for the plaintiff—damages fifty pounds; not a high estimate of the value of artistic morality on the part of the British jury.”

Mr. Pennell instituted the proceedings because the article—which, according to him, was “ostensibly inspired by the show of J’s [his own] Lithographs of Granada at the Fine Art Society’s”—had argued

“that to pass off drawings made on paper as lithographs, was as misleading to ‘the purchaser on the vital point of commercial value’ as to sell photogravures as etchings.”

Had the writer of the article declared, instead, that some of the lithographs exhibited by Mr. Pennell as his own works were half executed by Whistler, and that several others owed their chief merits to that master (Whistler, let us suppose, having been dead at the time), we certainly think that Mr. Pennell’s “artistic morality” would thereby have been much more seriously jeopardised than by any attack on so technical a point as the relative values of transfer-lithographs and those drawn direct on the stone.

He may now, perhaps, see more clearly in what predicament his statements to the *New York Times* interviewer placed Mr. Greaves; and therefore deem it both just and desirable—from the “artistic morality” point of view especially—to adduce proofs



that the latter passed off Whistler's work as his own, for that is plainly what Mr. Pennell's statements amounted to, and on him, of course, rests the onus either of substantiating his charge, or else of withdrawing it unreservedly.

Neither N.N.'s public announcement that

"the only charitable explanation is that the old man's memory is completely gone,"

nor Mr. Pennell's magniloquent statement

"that he exonerates both Mr. Greaves and Mr. Marchant, the director of the Goupil Gallery, from any desire deliberately (*sic*) to deceive the public,"

can in any way mitigate the gravity of the allegation brought against Mr. Greaves, or save Mr. Pennell from the consequences.

Surely it is fatuous to exonerate from any wilful desire to deceive a person who is held at the same time to be so mentally afflicted as to have lost all power of remembering. That a man should take himself and his own opinions most seriously, might be considered both natural and pardonable; but that he should spread broadcast, as established and accepted facts, what are nothing more than his own conjectures—entirely heedless of the deep offence and injury he may thereby cause to others—is a proceeding which the reader himself may well be left to qualify.

By coupling Mr. Marchant's name with that of Mr. Greaves in his exoneration, Mr. Pennell not only showed that his statements were, even in his own mind, liable to suggest fraud, but plainly inferred that Mr. Marchant was sufficiently associated with whatever Mr. Greaves had done, to require equal exculpation. As, however, no "charitable explanation" has been offered for the apparent guilelessness of our principal, who would seem to have sold Whistlers as Greaveses in a most unconcerned fashion, we are bound at least to attempt to defend the judgment of our "director," if the fortunes of the Goupil Gallery are, with safety, to be left to his guidance. This we will endeavour to do when we proceed, in Chapter X., to discuss in detail Mr. Pennell's dogmatic *expertises*.

It was bad enough for Mr. Pennell, with his facile and none too merciful pen, and his easy access to the columns of the Press, to wage this journalistic war against one whom he well knew to be, through sheer inexperience in such matters, apart from any other reasons, absolutely ill-equipped, if not unable, to reply with equal weapons and on the same ground.

But in what way had Mr. Greaves attacked Whistler that, in order to defend the latter, Mr. Pennell should have deemed it necessary to make against Mr. Greaves the allegations as reported in the *New York Times*? When so staunch a defender of Whistler's memory as Mr. Heinemann willingly acknowledged that Mr. Greaves's mistakes had been "innocently made," what right had N.N. to fasten on these same mistakes in order to hold up Mr. Greaves to public contempt by declaring that

"nobody of sense can again believe implicitly any statements made by Greaves in his letters or on his pictures?"

Mr. Greaves's personal testimony was his rightful, and might have been his only, means of defence against such assertions as those of Mr. Pennell; why therefore should anyone have publicly sought to discount its value by suggesting that his memory had "completely gone"?

Mr. Greaves is of course alone responsible for any statements he may have made concerning his pictures; while his art, which has been amply pronounced upon by artists, critics and connoisseurs, is able to speak for itself. We are, therefore, concerned with neither, on the present occasion. But if, in consequence of our initiative in holding an exhibition of his works, he has been suddenly forced out of a long and fameless seclusion into the full glare of world-wide interest and publicity, we are but fulfilling a moral responsibility if we endeavour to defend him when we consider that he has been subjected to an absolutely unmerited attack.

Mr. Pennell, however, as we have already explained, has himself imposed upon us an additional obligation to join issue with him. He knew perfectly well that the Goupil Gallery has, for nearly twenty years, been closely associated with Whistler and his works. To hold us up, therefore, before the world as unable to discriminate between Whistler's productions and those of one of his pupils, was tantamount to a very serious attack on our professional knowledge and our trustworthiness as dealers; for, if it became a fixed conviction in the mind of the public that we had sold Whistler's work as that of Mr. Greaves, it might not take long for the idea to gain ground that we could, in equal ignorance, sell the work of Mr. Greaves as that of Whistler. No firm could allow its interests to be thus jeopardised, without seeking to uphold them in the most strenuous manner.





## CHAPTER VI.

## MR. PENNELL AND THE "DISCOVERY" OF MR. GREAVES.

As Mr. Pennell possibly deemed it essential to create the suitable atmosphere around Mr. Greaves and his works, in order the better to succeed in belittling them—(we have seen N.N.'s attempt to smirch his *memory*!)—he may perhaps be excused for persistently endeavouring to decry any idea of "discovery."

"The Brothers Greaves and their work have been perfectly well known for years in Chelsea to all but these critics";  
and

"The story of Greaves is on record in the authorised life of Whistler published four years ago,"

so cutely wrote Mr. Pennell in his letters to the Press.

Of course the "Brothers Greaves" were well known in Chelsea; the contrary would have been surprising, considering they were born there, and had continually moved about in the neighbourhood for much more than half a century. A great deal of their work also was known there, but *not* work of the kind and period which we exhibited; and we desire to lay special stress on that most important point, of which Mr. Pennell must have been fully aware, if he really possessed the knowledge to which he lays claim. As, moreover, the canvases we showed had been hidden away for so many years, it would certainly be interesting to learn how they could have been well known to all in Chelsea.

Now our exhibition was not intended to show the works of a present-day painter, but to bring to light those that had been executed years ago by an artist who, though happening to be still alive, might, as far as they were concerned, have died immediately after having painted them. In whatever way

therefore Mr. Greaves's subsequent works—be they excellent, execrable, or indifferent—might affect his reputation or himself as a living producer, they have not the slightest bearing on the intrinsic merit of those he accomplished in his earlier manhood. Similarly, neither erroneous dates on his pictures nor any defects in his memory could at all modify the intrinsic merit any one of his works possessed, whatever may have been the period of their execution or the circumstances attending their production.

As our exhibition was composed of pictures executed in the 'sixties, 'seventies and 'eighties, and so unknown that few, if any, of the hundreds of visitors, had ever previously seen even one of them, it was surely the most natural thing in the world if, to the art critics, as to everyone else, the whole thing appeared as a *discovery*—which it certainly was, in the truest sense of the word, Mr. Pennell's irritation notwithstanding.

It seems therefore evident that, had "these critics" really desired, before writing about the exhibition, to arm themselves with "these facts" which Mr. Pennell says they were "ignorant of or wilfully concealing," even Chelsea could have been of slight help to them.

Let us, however, turn to "the authorised life of Whistler published four years ago," and see if "these critics" could have obtained from Mr. and Mrs. Pennell themselves more valuable information respecting Mr. Greaves's work.

The first reference to Mr. Greaves, as an artist, is to be found in Vol. I., on page 107, bearing date 1863 :—

"The two Greaves, Walter and Harry, painted, and he had them in his studio, teaching them by letting them work with and for him. We have often heard him speak of them as his 'first pupils.'"

On the following page, we read :—

"At one time, master and pupils attended a life class held in the evening by M. Barthe, a Frenchman, in Limerston Street, not far from the Row. Mr. J. E. Christie, another student in the same class, writes us :—

'Whistler was not a regular attender at the Limerston Street Studio, but came occasionally, and always accompanied by two young men—brothers—Greaves by name. They let out rowing-boats on the



Thames and Battersea Park. They simply adored Whistler, and were not unlike him in appearance, owing to an unconscious imitation of his dress and manner. It was amusing to watch the movements of the trio when they came into the studio (always late) . . . . . Then, having imitated in a general way the preliminaries, the two Greaves sat down on either side of him. There was a sort of tacit understanding that his and their studies should not be subjected to the rude gaze of the general . . . . .

The comical part was that his satellites didn't draw from the model at all, that I saw, but sat looking at Whistler's drawing and copying, as far as they could, that.' "

If Whistler wanted to teach his pupils how to draw and paint after his own manner, that was by no means an ineffectual method to adopt.

The only other reference to Mr. Greaves's work is on page 150, Vol. I.; but it is a most important one, being nothing less than Whistler's own appreciation of what, at that period, the Greaveses were capable of doing. Speaking of a pastel which Whistler made in 1873, as a design for one of the mosaic panels in the Central Gallery at South Kensington, the authors say :—

"The small design was to be enlarged, and put on a big canvas, which his 'pupils', the brothers Greaves, he said, would do for him."

Mr. Greaves's name is mentioned in several other places, but solely in connection with information which he supplied from his reminiscences to Mr. and Mrs. Pennell, who did not "four years ago"—as N.N. has done this year—pillory him before the whole world as a man whose statements "nobody of sense can again believe implicitly."

But is Mr. Pennell quite sure that, even for him, there was not a Greaves "discovery" in our exhibition? When, may we ask, did he, ever before, inform America or Europe that Mr. Greaves's work was so like Whistler's that it could easily be mistaken for it? Did he, even so recently as last winter, publicly attribute to Mr. Greaves the portrait of Whistler then exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum in New York? Why, if he possessed such knowledge of Mr. Greaves's work, has he not, long ago, uttered the grave and necessary word of warning? Thus Mr. Pennell, on his own showing, has surely given us another justification—one which might have sufficed by itself—for having held our exhibition.

It does, however, seem strange that, when he visited Mr. Greaves to obtain information for his book, he did not enquire about the work Mr. Greaves had done himself. Even if he only saw the large picture of "Chelsea Regatta," there was sufficient in it to excite at least curiosity. Had Mr. Pennell at all interested himself in the matter, he would, most probably, have been shown the bundles of canvases that were stowed away—those that we exhibited, as well as many others. He might then, possibly, have written about the "discovery" of Mr. Greaves in quite a different spirit, holding up the pupil as part of the *œuvre* of the master. He would thus have paid to Whistler a greater compliment, than by having represented him, by implication, as having failed, in the end, to make of one on whom he had bestowed so many years of affectionate tuition, together with the title of his "own pet pupil," anything better than a producer of the "uttermost rubbish and banality."

Lest it be thought, however, that we accuse either Mr. Pennell or N.N. of not having said even one kind word of Mr. Greaves, we recall the following tribute in *The Nation* :—

"It must be explained, however, that Greaves is no fool. In some ways he was an apt pupil."





## CHAPTER VII.

## THE PAINTING OF "MOONLIGHTS."

In his second letter to *The Sunday Times* (page 26), Mr. Pennell said that Whistler did not exhibit a nocturne till years after 1862. In a comment upon the late Mrs. Edwards's narrative that Whistler would, at times, drive from London to Sunbury in a hansom cab, the authors of *The Life of James McNeill Whistler* say in Vol. I., on page 93, bearing date 1861 :—

"Doubtless the driving down was an eccentricity. But Whistler knew he might see some 'foolish sunset,' or a Nocturne, on the way, and so the drive was worth it to him."

From this it may be concluded that, so far back as 1861, Whistler was already devoting himself to Nocturnes.

Again we have their testimony that Whistler often painted his pictures long before he exhibited them, fully bearing out our footnote on page 26; for, on page 88, Vol. I., we find these words:—

"the *Wapping* shown in the Academy of 1864, a proof of how long, even then, Whistler often kept his pictures before exhibiting them."

Therefore, the important point to determine is not so much when Whistler *exhibited*, as when he *painted* his *first* "Moonlight."

Mr. Pennell tells us on page 139, Vol. I., that the "upright Valparaiso, a perfect Nocturne," was executed in 1866. It would consequently not be surprising if in 1862, or even before that date, Whistler had painted something "of the sort" of Mr. Greaves's picture "Passing under old Battersea Bridge," intended, by the way, to be an effect of dawn and not of moonlight.

Now, as a matter of fact, neither Mr. Pennell, nor anyone else, seems to have known, before Mr. Greaves's old canvases were brought to light, how much Whistler had taught Mr. Greaves, and how near the "pet pupil" had got to the master's own manner and technique.

Mr. Greaves has told us of the numerous "Moonlights," full-length portraits, and other pictures of the Thames, Chelsea, and even Japanese subjects, which he has painted in the years gone by ; and this must needs have been the case, for him to have arrived at the skilful results he eventually obtained. Some day, these works may come to light and further help to realise Mr. Pennell's ardent desire

"exactly to determine Greaves's place in the world of Art."

We have Mr. and Mrs. Pennell's own testimony that he was with Whistler when the latter was "inventing" his "Moonlights," and working out to perfection his formulæ for their execution :—

" ' I know all these things because I passed days and weeks in the place standing with and beside him,' Walter Greaves has said to us. And so it happens that, of the methods and materials of few other modern painters, is there so accurate a record as of Whistler's when he painted the Nocturnes."—  
Vol. I., p. 164, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*.

We can therefore easily imagine the pupil following, with his own brush and canvas, every progressive step of the master, painting the same subjects, as far as he could, in the very same way ; and advancing, as it were, simultaneously with him—sharing the disappointments of his failures, as well as the joys of his discoveries. If, in later years, Whistler taught to others the method as it was finally acquired, only the Greaveses appear to have been his intimate associates, in the days when he himself was inventing and working it out. Thanks to Mr. Heinemann's letter to *The Times* (page 16), the world now possesses Whistler's own testimony that his pupils, the brothers Greaves, not only were perfectly acquainted with his method of painting "Moonlights," but were—and apparently they only—to practise them with the seal of his approval :—

"Suppose you were to see any other fellow doing my moonlights, how vexed you would be. You see, I *invented* them. Never in the history of art have they been done. Well, nothing more natural than that you two should do them, and quite right that the traditions of the studio should go on through the pupils."

What else is this passage—written, by the way, in connection with the painting of a portrait by Mr. Walter Greaves of one of his sisters—but Whistler's own charter to Mr. Greaves to



continue to paint *his* "moonlights," until the end of his days, should he desire to do so?

We have fully tested Mr. Greaves's capabilities in this direction, if we may say so without offence to him, and have satisfied ourselves that he still has the whole thing at his fingers' ends. Facing page 76 will be found the reproduction of a "Moonlight" he has executed, since the exhibition opened, entirely from memory, almost under our eyes, and probably in about the same time Whistler would have taken to paint one of his own.

Some people may be tempted to ask: *What were* those "Moonlights" which Whistler evidently knew the Greaveses to be painting at that time, and *where are they now*?



## CHAPTER VIII.

## WHISTLER AND HIS DISCARDED WORKS.

It is generally considered that one of the most effectual ways of reverencing the memory of a dead person, is to shape one's actions in accordance with, and, whenever possible, to carry out what are known to have been, that person's express wishes during life.

In order to defend Whistler's memory, Mr. Pennell is at great pains to fasten back on him the authorship of certain works which, according to N.N. in *The Nation*,

"look like canvases which Whistler, dissatisfied, had thrown away, only that their fate should be to have Greaves take them up and ruin them."

Now Whistler once gave to our principal a full and reasoned exposition of his theory that an artist had, under certain circumstances, the right to repudiate his own work. Whilst it might fail to find acceptance with a British jury, it was, nevertheless, a theory logically and consistently discussable, if the reputation of the artist be considered as the sole object in view.

Fortunately, he has left the printed record, not only of his ideas on that point, but also of the manner in which, on occasion, he treated works of his own with which he was "dissatisfied." Thus, on page 288 of *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, is a letter from Whistler of July 27th, 1891, to the *Pall Mall*



*Gazette*, in which he protested against a certain firm of Bond Street dealers showing

a painting long ago barely begun, and thrown aside for destruction";

and thought it

"but right that the public should be warned against the possible purchase of a picture in no way representative, and, in its actual condition, absolutely worthless."

In a further letter, August 1st, 1891, to the same paper (pages 291-292, *The Gentle Art &c.*), he wrote:—

"I felt called upon to advise the public that one of *my own works* is condemned *by myself*. Final this, one would fancy!

\* \* \* \* \*

The dealer's business is to buy and sell. In the course of such traffic, these same busy picture bodies, without consulting me, put upon the market a painting that I, the author, intended to efface—and, thanks to your courtesy, I have been enabled to say so effectually in your journal. All along have I carefully destroyed plates, torn up proofs, and burned canvases, that the truth of the quoted word shall prevail, and that the future collector shall be spared the mortification of cataloguing his pet mistakes. To destroy, is to remain."

Alas! Whistler had not reckoned with his zealous biographer.



## CHAPTER IX.

## STREATHAM HALL.

In the letter which Mr. Pennell circulated amongst some of the English papers—and (especially) in the New York *Nation* article—references were made to the Greaves pictures at Streatham Hall, with a motive too thinly disguised to require any further interpretation.

Streatham Hall consists of a series of assembly-rooms the walls of which Mr. Greaves and his brother were commissioned, some years ago, to cover with as many of their pictures as possible.

As assembly-rooms are mostly used at night-time, their decorations are probably intended to be seen by artificial light. In the day-time, however, the lighting of these rooms is so deficient, from the point of view of seeing pictures on the walls, that it seems almost incredible that anyone could have painted, in their present position, those that are there.

Nevertheless, Mr. Greaves and his brother, however adverse the circumstances, executed about a hundred pictures—all on a large scale—*painting them direct on to the walls*, and choosing, as subjects, their own cherished views of Chelsea, Cremorne, the Thames and its bridges, regattas, fireworks, &c. ; together with full-length figures, classical designs, birds, flowers, and enlargements of Japanese prints. These last suggest such possibilities for effective schemes of decoration, that—but for the fear of Mr. Pennell indignantly confronting us with “*La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine*”—we might have been tempted to compliment the brothers Greaves on having initiated the idea.

We are told by N.N. that all these works are the

“uttermost rubbish and banality,”

a personal opinion which N.N., Mr. Pennell, or anyone else,



is, of course, perfectly free to express. Moreover, it is apparently quite legal Art Criticism (perhaps of the *Rowland Strong* type), since, as we have already seen, page 41, an English judge has said

“that a critic might express a most disparaging opinion on an artist’s work.”

But when two pupils, with their master’s full sanction to carry on the “traditions of the studio,” introduced, into some of their painted frames, a few of the Japanese *motifs* with which they were wont to decorate those of the master, and, for so doing, are accused of having “stolen” even the designs of Whistler’s frames, that comes perilously near to attributing

“to the artist most discreditable conduct,”

from which we think N.N. should most certainly have refrained.

Mr. Pennell was less liable to incur censure, when he frankly confessed to the Editors of *The Sunday Times*, *The Star*, &c., that, notwithstanding a wide difference in dates, it was impossible for him to “distinguish” “Nocturnes” at Streatham Hall, then almost obliterated by damp, and each measuring more than 4 by 5 *feet*, from two little pictures in the Goupil Gallery exhibition, of about 10 by 12 *inches* each, plainly visible, and only somewhat similar in subjects to the larger ones.

Whilst in the mood for making such *candid admissions*, it seems a pity he did not go a step farther, and tell of the extraordinary difficulty which, it is said, he experienced, at Streatham Hall, in *distinguishing* between *canvas* and *cement*.

On one of the end walls of the biggest room, there is a large frameless picture by Mr. Greaves, measuring roughly 9 by 13 feet, which can easily be touched by anyone standing on a chair. Mr. Pennell, for some occult reason, insisted that this picture was executed on *canvas*. In vain, did the genial manager of the Hall, to whom we are indebted for this anecdote, asseverate that it was painted direct on to the wall, adducing, as proof, that when holes caused by nails driven at times through the face of the picture were being filled up, it was quite easy to see that no *canvas* existed. With no better effect was the

testimony produced of the old hall-cleaner, who had seen, not only the wall being prepared with a *cement* surface for the work, but Mr. Greaves actually painting the picture thereon.

Mr. Pennell, having decreed that this picture was on canvas, summarily dismissed all further discussion with the perplexing remark :

“ There's some mystery about the whole thing.”

!





## CHAPTER X.

## DISCUSSION OF THE WORKS IMPUGNED BY MR. PENNELL.

Mr. Pennell's unsupported statement that some of the exhibited works were partly by Whistler, could, of course, be easily met by Mr. Greaves simply asserting that he himself was their sole author ; and this would be deemed sufficiently conclusive in any controversy conducted according to the ordinary rules of courtesy. He must surely have anticipated that some such assertion would be made by Mr. Greaves. The reader, however, will perhaps notice, as a curious coincidence, that, if the effort made by N.N. to publicly discredit the value of Mr. Greaves's personal testimony had been successful, it would have proved a most effectual means of safeguarding Mr. Pennell's pronouncements concerning some of Mr. Greaves's works.

At all events, in view of the attitude he has adopted towards Mr. Greaves, we have preferred to discuss his charges solely in the light of his own given reasons, of our knowledge and experience of the matters in question, of ordinary common sense, and, finally, of such extraneous proofs and adventitious aids as it was possible to procure.

Mr. Pennell had discussed with us two of the pictures and the etching he has since publicly declared to be, in greater part, the work of Whistler ; but—except in the case of the etching—we had not the faintest idea that he intended to publish his conclusions. Whether it was through forgetfulness or an excess of modesty that he withheld from the public the reasons he gave us at the time, the omission is none the less regrettable, for his *reasons* were, of all things, the most essential to make known.

We will, however, endeavour, as far as we can, to supply

the deficiency, so that the public may be better enabled to estimate the value of Mr. Pennell as an *expert* in Whistler's work; for is not that, in reality, one of the most important points to determine in this controversy?

"Passing Under Old Battersea Bridge." (*Catalogue, No. 47.*)

We have seen in the *New York Times* interview that, with reference to this picture,

"Mr. Pennell declares that there is intrinsic evidence that it was Whistler's hand that painted the background of barges, which is the chief feature."

We may remark, *en passant*, that practically all the admirers of this work, and their number was great, singled out, as its striking feature, not the background, but the solemnity of design of the bridge in conjunction with the barges. As it is reproduced facing page 14, the reader may easily satisfy himself on that point.

When Mr. Pennell discussed this picture with us, his main contention was that Mr. Greaves, or someone, had painted the *dark* bridge and barges over a *light* moonlight picture, which he unhesitatingly held to be Whistler's work. He professed to see quite clearly, towards the top of the right-hand pier, the brushwork of light paint continuing under the dark portion. We had to acknowledge our inability to detect anything of the kind, although we could easily distinguish the thin ribs of the fine canvas on which the picture was painted, as also the thicker ones of the coarse canvas used for relining.

But Mr. Pennell was not to be daunted; he was convinced that a slight rubbing with spirit would easily remove the superimposed bridge, and reveal the remainder of the picture which, according to him, had been used as a background. If the background had been put in first, and the dark bridge and barges had then been painted over it, nothing very unusual as a method would have been followed; so that Mr. Pennell's "discovery," had it been effected, would not, of itself, have necessarily proved that Whistler, and not Mr. Greaves, had painted the background.

Mr. Pennell further pointed out some small wavy brushwork



in the sky—a sure sign to him of Whistler's authorship. This kind of brushwork, which is to be found in several of Whistler's "Nocturnes," was perfectly well-known to Mr. Greaves who, it happens, had previously explained to us how Whistler specially prepared his brushes for the purpose, so as to make them more rigid. We also know for certain that Mr. Greaves himself adopted it—probably because "in some ways he was an apt pupil"—and traces of it were, as a matter of fact, evident in another of the exhibited pictures: No. 43, "The Frozen Thames" (which, by the way, a non-believer in Greaves scared us by attributing to Cecil Lawson).

Now, unfortunately for Mr. Pennell, his *dark-over-light* theory was untenable, as a careful examination of the picture sufficed to show; for, on each side, especially in the lower half, there were sections plainly visible where *the light paint did not even meet the dark*. Enlarged photographs of these lateral sections are here reproduced facing this page (Figures I. and II.), conclusively proving the accuracy of our statement.

It will be seen in the reproduction of the picture (facing page 14) that the drooping part of the distant bridge meets the dark bridge at the second indent from the bottom on the right-hand side. This particular indent is the one on a line with the X on Fig. II., facing this page, and there it is easily discernible that the sweep of the brush, when the distant bridge was being painted, did not reach the inner edge of the said indent—which goes to prove that the distant bridge was painted *after* the front one, and as a necessary complement to the main composition.

In other parts, especially in the wide indent at the inner top of the bridge, there are traces of the light paint actually *overlapping* the dark edges, as may be seen by referring to Fig. III., facing this page—which surely disposes entirely of Mr. Pennell's contention.

Anyone with the slightest sense of design, looking at this picture, or even at the reproduction, will feel, we think, that the whole scheme must have been conceived by one mind. There is evident such unity of purpose, that bridge, barges, and background are as essential, each one to the other, as they all are to the perfect idea of the composition. A careful examination



FIG. III.

FIG. I.



FIG. II.

X



FIG. I.

Shows the bottom  
indent on left-hand  
pier.

FIG. II.

Shows the last two  
indents at the bot-  
tom of right-hand  
pier.

FIG. III.

Shows the indent  
at the top of the  
bridge.





of the manner in which this picture is painted, especially in the lower part where the piers and barges reflect in the water, shows that the whole scheme must have been carried out by one hand and at one time, and that there is unity and homogeneity of treatment as well as of conception. It is difficult to imagine what sort of composition could have been that of the supposed Whistler, with its drooping bridge ; whereas, if Mr. Greaves had in reality taken up such a canvas begun by Whistler, with the result now existing, he was gifted with wider knowledge of arrangement, and greater facility for combining ideas, than he has hitherto been credited with.

“Some of the reflections in the river were also put in by Whistler.”—N.N. in *The Nation*.

Such powers of discrimination are truly marvellous. Who, may we ask, put in *the others*, and why single out *some* of the reflections only, as having been put in by Whistler, if “it was Whistler’s hand that painted the background” ? With a little more *reflection*, the case against Mr. Greaves might, we think, have been constructed with at least a little more logic.

By the courtesy of Mr. Charles Aitken, Director of the Tate Gallery, we have been able to examine thoroughly this picture side by side with Whistler’s famous *Nocturne—Blue and Gold—Old Battersea Bridge*.\* To compare these works was a most interesting and instructive occupation ; they were so entirely different in composition, colour, technique, and even canvas, that the difficulty was to establish points of resemblance. The comparison further revealed the futility of all the discussion which has centred around the question of priority of execution.

It was, we may say, merely as a matter of interest, that we asked Mr. Greaves, when he inspected his canvases, whether his picture had been painted before or after the one by Whistler in the Tate Gallery. It would now seem as if, in the simple reply he made, as contained in the preface to the catalogue, there was conveyed from pupil to master, a much higher tribute than has hitherto been publicly recognised.

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\* These two pictures are reproduced facing page 32.



"Portrait of the Artist." (*Catalogue, No. 37.*)

"Mr. Pennell . . . adds that several other paintings in the Greaves Exhibition owe their chief merits to Whistler's brush, instancing . . . the head of Greaves in the portrait of himself, supposedly the work of the latter artist."

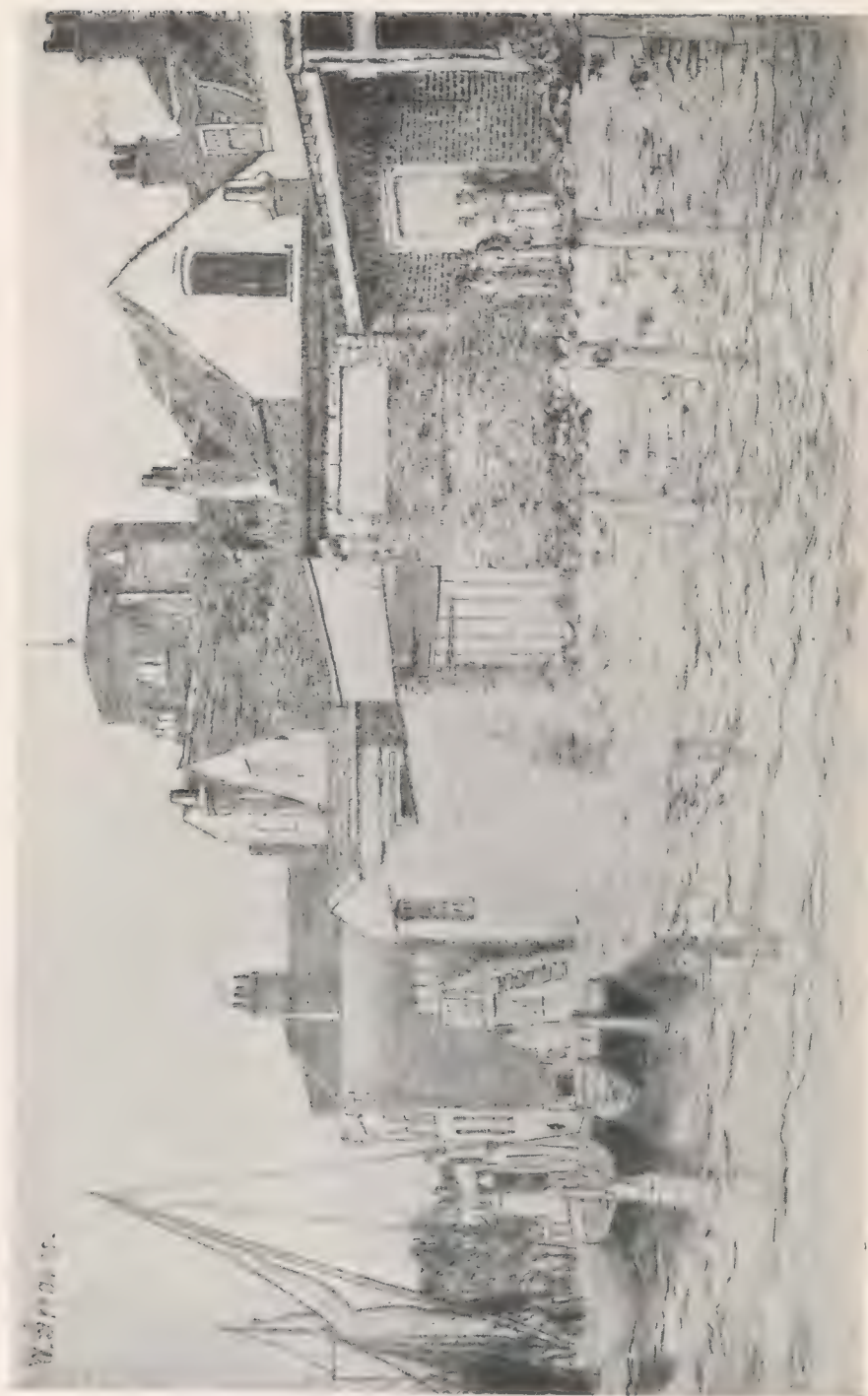
"'Whistler began his portrait and Greaves finished it—finished it in more ways than one'—said Mr. Pennell succinctly to the *New York Times* correspondent to-day."—*New York Times*, May 24th, 1911.

Mr. Pennell's venturesome hypothesis presumably is that Whistler began one of his many self-portraits, and that Mr. Greaves, at some time or other, took it up, turned it into one of himself—for that it undoubtedly is now—and, as the expression goes, "thoroughly did for it." The statement is not much improved even if he meant that Whistler began a portrait of Mr. Greaves. This picture is reproduced as our frontispiece.

Of course, Mr. Pennell only says that Whistler "began his portrait." But if Mr. Greaves had covered Whistler's paint with his own, how could Mr. Pennell or anyone else see what was underneath? What did he mean by saying that the "head" owed its "chief merits to Whistler's brush," whilst practically declaring in the same breath that Mr. Greaves had so worked on it as to ruin it? Only if certain important parts of this portrait remained, which could undoubtedly be attributed to Whistler, and were still untouched by anyone else, could its "chief merits" be said to be due to him. Either Mr. Pennell should, in all justice, have supported his allegation by pointing out which were those parts, even if he meant that Whistler began a portrait of Mr. Greaves, or else refrained from uttering a remark which, under the circumstances, appears more conspicuous for offensiveness than for sense.

That Mr. Pennell was impressed by this portrait seems evident, but we challenge him to produce the slightest proof that Whistler either drew or painted a single portion of the face or neck. That he had nothing to do with the rest of the picture is obvious, even to Mr. Pennell.

If only his penetrating eye had pierced through the paint to the millboard, he might have compared it with that used by Mr. Greaves for other pictures in the Exhibition, and possibly acquired thereby knowledge still deeper.



*(This is a reproduction of a smaller etching than "Barges, Lime Wharf, Chelset"—Figs. I. and II.  
It did not figure in Mr. Greaves's Exhibition.)*

(Size of the Plate:  $6\frac{1}{4}$  by 9 inches).





"The Balcony." (*Catalogue, No. 41.*)

This picture, a reproduction of which faces page 38, might be said, as far as the background is concerned, to be the most Whistlerian of the three singled out by Mr. Pennell. As he only mentions the background as due to Whistler's brush (*New York Times* interview), all the elaborate painting of woodwork and leafage is evidently left to Mr. Greaves; otherwise there would be nothing to show how he had managed to "ruin" what, according to N.N. in *The Nation*, looked like one of those "canvases which Whistler, dissatisfied, had thrown away."

Now there is a rigidity of line and a sharpness of contour, and altogether a certain materialness in the handling of the distant buildings, which, in our opinion, preclude this work, however near it may be to Whistler's, from being the result of his light, airy, and ethereal treatment.

Neither in the semi-opaqueness nor in the actual tone of the water, still less in the reflections, could we discern the subtlety of Whistler; but we did see the work of Mr. Greaves, and, with the knowledge and experience of it which we now possess, we are sure that the painting of this background presented to him no difficulty whatever.

What another "Pupil of Whistler" thought of this picture, will be found in Mr. Walter Sickert's article on page 76. As Mr. Pennell did not discuss this picture with us, we cannot quote his reasons for attributing it to Whistler.

We now come to the last item in Mr. Pennell's list of definite indictments against Mr. Greaves, namely, the etching:—

"Barges, Lime Wharf, Chelsea." (*Catalogue, No. 13.*)

Over this plate, which is reproduced facing page 62, Fig. II., Mr. Pennell grew most excited. He was perfectly certain that all the dry-point engraving on the hulls in the foreground was done by Whistler, and, in the backstays loosely hanging from the cross-tree, he was positive he saw "Jimmy's line."

We remarked that, if Whistler had done some of this



dry-point work, it would only bear out Mr. Greaves's own statement in the prefatory letter, that Whistler would often take the needle from him and correct there and then on the plate. But Mr. Pennell would have none of this; for him *the plate was originally Whistler's*, one of his boat-subjects, which Mr. Greaves had subsequently worked upon, etching in the background afterwards. Even the figures were, in his opinion, more or less "Jimmy's." Pointing significantly to Mr. Greaves's signature in the top left-hand corner, he "succinctly" and ominously remarked that it had no business to be there.

In vain did we argue with Mr. Pennell, even showing him another etching by Mr. Greaves (reproduced facing page 60), with a somewhat similar background, and without boats in the foreground; but he was immovable.

Now this other etching was printed from a *smaller* copper, and this we pointed out to Mr. Pennell; yet somehow or other he considered it as only further supporting his contention, although he had previously held that *Whistler's boats were the first things on the plate*. Mr. Pennell is unfathomable.

It mattered little what Mr. Greaves had done to the plate, it was by right "Jimmy's"—so much so, that he, Mr. Pennell, would certainly include it in his catalogue of Whistler's works. He even subsequently wrote asking us to let him have a proof of the plate or a photograph of the subject to enable him to do so. Of course we refused, stating that we could not be a party to such a transaction.

Mr. Greaves afterwards told us that, as the acid did not sufficiently bite the plate at first, especially in the foreground, he endeavoured to strengthen the design by means of dry-point work, more particularly on the hulls of the barges.

We have since been fortunate enough to come across a proof of this plate taken *before the dry-point work was added*, and it is reproduced facing this page, Fig. I. It fully bears out Mr. Greaves's statement by showing that, before any dry-point work was added, the plate contained the complete subject together with Mr. Greaves's signature.

Now if there were any truth whatever in Mr. Pennell's statement to us concerning this plate, as also in N.N.'s



FIG. I.



*(This reproduction shows the state of the plate before the addition of the dry-point retouches.)*

**"BARGES, LIME WHARF, CHELSEA"**

By Walter Greaves

(Size of the Plate:  $6\frac{7}{8}$  by  $10\frac{7}{8}$  inches).

FIG. II.



*(This reproduction shows the final state of the plate.)*

**"BARGES, LIME WHARF, CHELSEA"**

By Walter Greaves

*Catalogue No, 13*





phonographic reproduction of it when he or she stated in *The Nation* (page 38), that there is

“one plate that is at least half done by Whistler and must be added to his work,”

it is plain that only the *retouches* could constitute this half, since the merest student in etching would never dream of attributing to Whistler the plate reproduced in Fig. I., facing page 62. Also “Jimmy’s line” would evidently have been in the backstays *before* “Jimmy’s” dry-point boats had made their appearance. Was “Jimmy” also responsible for the dry-point smoke issuing from the chimney on the right in the final state of the plate (Fig. II.)? There is no smoke in the earlier proof (Fig. I.); whereas Mr. Greaves’s smaller etching (facing page 60) does contain a similar rendering of smoke, as also a certain amount of dry-point work.

If Whistler had retouched this plate to the extent of one half, it was no slight compliment from master to pupil; whereas if Mr. Greaves did his own retouching, then his work has received the highest encomium from no less an authority on etching than Mr. Joseph Pennell who, with N.N., has, not only considered it comparable with Whistler’s, but actually determined to appropriate it as such. But Mr. Pennell would not have it either way, whilst, at the worst, Mr. Greaves would appear to have scored.

We considered it a very serious thing when Mr. Pennell informed us that he would include this plate in his catalogue of Whistler’s works; but, although we refused to be accessories before the fact, we had not then formed—as we since have, with the help of the above proofs—so definite an opinion of Mr. Pennell as *guide* and *expert* in the etched work of Whistler.

If, therefore, we still have the temerity to oppose the *expertise* he has given with reference to this plate, it is mainly in order

“that the future collector shall be spared the mortification of cataloguing *his*\* pet mistakes.”

Mr. Greaves, since the close of the exhibition, has put his signature to every work which did not already bear it, leaving it wherever it existed previously.

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\* Italics ours, with full apology to Whistler.



## CHAPTER XI.

## THE WHISTLER-GREAVES QUESTION.

In the whole of Mr. Pennell's writings or sayings on the subject, there is, in our opinion, but one passage containing a contribution of any value to what may rightly be termed the *Whistler-Greaves Question*; it is the one near the end of the *New York Times* interview, where it is said :—

“Mr. Pennell believes that unless steps are at once taken exactly to determine Greaves's place in the world of art there will result confusion between his work and Whistler's which will become an outrageous scandal. Already, says Mr. Pennell, much of Greaves's work has been foisted upon the public as Whistler's.”

The reader might feel rather bewildered if, after having written the preceding chapter, we refused to agree with Mr. Pennell as to the possibility and likelihood of such confusion; it is somewhat pathetic, however, that he should be the one to have made such a declaration to the world, but we rejoice at realising, as one of the results of our exhibition, that he has been led to do so.

But we are utterly at variance with him as to the methods he has chosen for solving the difficulty.

We are of the opinion (and Mr. Pennell has but confirmed it), that some of Mr. Greaves's early work might possibly be mistaken for Whistler's, especially by people insufficiently versed in the knowledge of both; and it is only since Mr. Greaves has parted with all his old canvases that this state of things seems to have been revealed.

We cannot, however, see that

“exactly to determine Greaves's place in the world of art ”

would at all help anyone to rightly decide whether Whistler or Mr. Greaves was the author of a work in dispute. In fact, we fail at all to see the relevancy of the sentence, unless it were

merely intended as a pretext for the unworthy attack then about to be made on Mr. Greaves and his work, by N.N. in the *New York Nation*. In that case, it would almost appear as if the real desire had been, less to determine exactly Greaves's place *in* the world of art, than to produce the impression that his rightful place was hopelessly *outside*.

Now this *Whistler-Greaves Question* was, and remains, a serious one, not by any means unfraught with difficulties. It should therefore have been approached in a far more measured and unbiassed manner, and treated with a greater consideration for the various interests involved—also with that elementary sense of equity, which recognises that justice is no less due to the living than to the dead.

Whereas, to have adopted at the very outset a violently partisan attitude, and subsequently to have rushed into print, declaring Whistlers to be Greaveses and Greaveses Whistlers, in a most irresponsible fashion, was to make confusion worse confounded, and might be truly described as the method *par excellence* of—*HOW NOT TO DO IT*.

Mr. Pennell should have recognised the necessity of acting with at least a certain amount of circumspection, since he confided to the *New York Times* interviewer that

“already . . . much of Greaves's work has been foisted upon the public as Whistler's.”

And when, specifically referring to

“a portrait said to be by Whistler now in the collection of Charles R. (*sic*) Freer, of Detroit, which was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum in New York a year ago,”

he dogmatically declared that

“this portrait . . . is not by Whistler, but by Greaves,”

he further demonstrated the need of proceeding most cautiously, by showing what similarity, and even affinity, must have existed between Whistler's work and some of Mr. Greaves's, for such authorities as Mr. Charles L. Freer and the Director of the Metropolitan Museum to have been deceived—(if not Mr. Pennell).





## CHAPTER XII.

## A SIGNIFICANT RUMOUR.

In view of such a state of things, we consider it not at all inopportune to give publicity to a certain rumour, which, for some time past, has been floating about, and which is by no means irrelevant to the question under consideration. We do not wish it, however, to be thought that we connect Mr. Pennell with it in any way whatsoever. It is to the following effect.

In the long-ago, Whistler (we will not say why) is supposed to have entrusted to Mr. Greaves and his brother a certain number of his painted canvases, to be safely stored until such time as it would be expedient to bring them to light again.

As the years went by, Whistler would presumably have forgotten either their existence or their whereabouts, and Mr. Greaves, probably as a "loyal pupil," would have followed his master's example to such an extent as, in more recent years, to take up and work on some of them, completely oblivious of the fact that they were Whistler's and not his own; while others, which had remained in the same state as that in which they had been received, would, as far as Mr. Greaves's memory was concerned, have eventually left his hands as so many of his own old canvases.

This little story would have been all the better, had Whistler been known to possess a more defective memory in respect of pictures which, at various times and for certain reasons, he might have allowed to pass into the safe keeping of others.

It should be plainly understood that it is not here a question at all of such works as, according to Whistler, were from time to time *stolen* from his studio.

Now it will at once be seen that, should this rumour ever gain a strong footing, it would, on the one hand, prove a most valuable instrument in the hands of such unscrupulous persons as might be tempted to palm off bogus Whistlers. *The Summer Palace at Peking* has been too useful a formula in the past, for the very obvious advantages of *The Greaves Lumber-Room* to be neglected in the future. Then, perhaps, might "these critics," with reason, be "appalled" by the reappearance of some long-lost *Nocturne*—the unearthing of *Unfinished pictures* or *Interesting studies*—or the "further discovery" of hitherto *Unknown portraits* by the great master.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that, in the course of the transactions of which Mr. Pennell must have been cognisant when he stated to the *New York Times* London correspondent that

"already . . . much of Greaves's work has been foisted upon the public as Whistler's,"

not a few people may have bought, and even resold, such work, in perfect good faith, and under the firm conviction that they were dealing with genuine work by Whistler. For such as these, the above rumour, were it to gain general credence, would be most injurious, as likely to lull them into a state of false security.

If, however, they were to take fright at Mr. Pennell's strident note of alarm, and wish for an authoritative opinion on their purchases, to whom are they to have recourse? So long as Mr. Greaves is alive, he ought surely to be considered the final arbiter in such matters. But, for some reason or another, a strong effort seems to have been made to destroy this most efficacious means of authentication, when N.N. declared that Mr. Greaves's

"memory is completely gone,"

and that

"nobody of sense can again believe implicitly any statements made by Greaves in his letters or on his pictures."

Thus Mr. Greaves would, supposedly, be no longer an authority on his own work; and were he to write or say that



he did, or did not paint, any given picture, no more attention would have to be paid to his word, than to that of a quite irresponsible person.

If Mr. Pennell had not been the author of N.N.'s statements, it was his plain duty, in Whistler's interest, to refute them immediately. Having failed to do so, he cannot be acquitted of being charged with a certain responsibility, should any scandal result from the confusion of Mr. Greaves's work with Whistler's, since, to say the least, he has acquiesced in an endeavour to destroy the value of Mr. Greaves's word which unquestionably was the best safeguard against the possibility of such confusion.

We have had constant intercourse with Mr. Greaves since we made his acquaintance, and feel it but our plain duty to declare that we cannot support the statements made by Mr. Pennell and N.N. with reference to Mr. Greaves's complete loss of memory.

It will be time enough for the public to believe in the rumour to which we have referred in the beginning of this chapter, when those who are responsible for its origin, whoever they may be, see their way to corroborate it publicly by means of indisputable proofs. Further, if purchasers want to run no risks in such matters, they will be well advised—bearing in mind all that has been said concerning the great similarity between much of Mr. Greaves's work and Whistler's—to refuse to entertain the purchase of any picture, drawing, etc., said to be by Whistler, which lacks his genuine signature, or is not already well known, unless it be provided with such a pedigree or other information as places its authenticity beyond all possible doubt.



## CHAPTER XIII.

DISCUSSION OF VARIOUS INTERESTS.—MR. PENNELL  
AS *EXPERT*.

It may not be amiss to review briefly the possible interests of the various parties concerned in this affair.

Let us begin with Mr. Greaves. Since his good faith in the matter has been placed, even by Mr. Pennell, beyond all suspicion, there could have been no material advantage to him in giving 1862 instead of 1873 as the date of exhibition of his picture "Passing under Old Battersea Bridge."

Now, it is evidently against our *pecuniary* interest, as dealers, not to uphold Mr. Pennell's statement that some of our Greaveses were Whistlers; for "The Balcony" picture still remains our property, as also the copper-plate of the etching, "Barges, Lime Wharf, Chelsea." What lucrative transactions might have been made with Mr. Greaves's old canvases, had Mr. Pennell's *expertise* been sought and obtained in the very beginning, and Mr. Greaves left entirely untroubled in the matter! Such a course would also have undoubtedly saved some of "these critics" from the wrath and indignation of Mr. Pennell, who, in turn, would have been spared the necessity of publicly exonerating

"both Mr. Greaves and Mr. Marchant, the director of the Goupil Gallery, from any desire deliberately to deceive the public."

Alas! for Mr. Pennell (and, we fear, for "these critics" also) we held an exhibition of works by Mr. Walter Greaves, Pupil of Whistler. Some day, perhaps, it may become more apparent to what extent we really served Whistler's memory by so doing.

Frankly, we cannot see in what manner Whistler's cause has gained through Mr. Pennell's action.

In the first place, his fame and his memory would, in our opinion, suffer less if someone else had actually appropriated one of his cast-off canvases, and put his name to it, than if he, Whistler, had had forced back on him the authorship of a work he had discarded years before as unsatisfactory. Still



less, could his reputation be enhanced by the successful attributions to him of works done by one of his pupils.

In the second place, Mr. Pennell's public exhibition of such exaggerated fears and nervous apprehension, lest it be thought that Whistler had not been the real inventor of his "Moon-lights," was far more calculated to create suspicion and to shake the confidence of many in the latter's reputation, than the most suppositional theories advanced by "these art critics," however much they were, according to Mr. Pennell,

"united in an attempt to smirch the memory and decry the art of James McNeill Whistler, the greatest artist of the nineteenth century,"

and "bent, as of old," on his "downfall."

Mr. Pennell was, of course, perfectly free to express whatever opinions he chose on the merits or demerits of Mr. Greaves's works, but it was quite a different matter when he proceeded to dogmatise on their authorship.

We do not know on what grounds he justifies his right to speak as an *expert* on Whistler's productions; but there is a danger that a certain section of the public may be led to imagine that whatever reputation for excellence Mr. and Mrs. Pennell may have acquired as the biographers of Whistler, must consequently invest with proportionate authority any statements they may make regarding the authenticity of his works. To draw such an inference would, of course, be as absurd as to gauge the weight of a writer's opinions by that of the volumes containing them.

Still, Mr. Pennell's public declarations on this subject may not be without a certain humorous aspect. Since he has discovered, in some of Mr. Greaves's works, sufficient merit and quality to make him unhesitatingly ascribe to Whistler at least portions of them, it follows that, if his attributions are wrong, he has (quite unwittingly perhaps) simply joined, with all "these critics," in

"the almost universal pæan of praise of Greaves."

In addition to the inevitably implied offensiveness, there is surely a touch of the grotesque in the spectacle of a man delivering public judgment on the authorship of the works

of a living artist, without the latter being so much as taken into account—let alone consulted on the subject. We commend this situation to the serious thought of “all in Chelsea,” and for once agree with N.N., that nothing so extraordinary ever happened to Whistler—*Hiatus maxime deflendus*.

Whilst, however, Mr. Pennell enjoys perfect freedom to express fully his views (within the proper limitations), we are equally at liberty to criticise and, if necessary, to condemn his treatment of Mr. Greaves ; still more is it our right and duty to protest against his methods of antagonism, or those of anyone else, when the interests of our business may be prejudiced thereby. That we have just cause for complaint will be evident when we say that we are convinced that one of the results, whether direct or indirect, of Mr. Pennell's campaign in the English and American Press, has been to produce—especially in America—the impression that we had lent ourselves to some sort of anti-Whistler manifestation.

We wish to repudiate absolutely having harboured, even for one moment, any desire or intention of such a nature.

The very suggestion is likely to cause us the greatest prejudice, especially in the minds of those who know of the close business relations we had with Whistler, and of the friendly feelings he had towards us—proof of which he gave almost up to the very day of his death.

Finally, let us say that all the turmoil and trouble caused by Mr. Pennell's warfare, could have been avoided, had he, in the very beginning, pointed out to us Mr. Greaves's slip of memory, together with its possible consequences ; and waited until we had been able to publish—jointly with him if desired—whatever might have been necessary for the rectification of history as far as Whistler was concerned. The result, we think, would have been no less effective and dignified than the one he has achieved, whilst the further advantage would have been secured that all the pain and injury which his campaign has unquestionably inflicted in certain quarters would have been avoided ; as also—and not least—the necessity of issuing this reply to his attack.





## CHAPTER XIV.

## OUR CONCLUSIONS.

Since we have freely discussed Mr. Pennell's opinions, it is but fair that we should plainly state what our own convictions are in respect of the matters in dispute.

The very fact of our having held an exhibition of works *by* Mr. Walter Greaves, was, in itself, a public acknowledgment that we believed them all to have been executed by him. This belief has become a conviction, not only from the fuller knowledge we have since acquired of both the painter and his works, but also from the more intimate study which Mr. Pennell's sayings and writings have induced us to make of the whole question.

We are brought, in consequence, to reject, in their entirety, Mr. Pennell's allegations concerning the pictures and the etching discussed in Chapter X.; and, further, to say that, until he has supported his public statements respecting them, by arguments more convincing and conclusive than the flimsy reasons he gave to us, we, at all events, refuse to consider him as either a safe guide or a sound judge in questions affecting the authenticity of Whistler's works.

That we fully exonerate Mr. Pennell

"from any desire deliberately to deceive the public,"

goes without saying; but we think that any member of the public who has carefully read this book will necessarily accept with caution the opinions which Mr. Pennell has expressed on some of Mr. Greaves's works, and which we have herein examined and criticised. We consider that our knowledge of these works is greater than that of Mr. Pennell, and we have felt it our duty to Whistler no less than to Mr. Greaves and ourselves, to make a full use of such knowledge in the foregoing pages, so as to enable the public to form a clearer opinion of the respective merits and position of master and pupil.

We by no means dispute Mr. Pennell's right to possess and express his own opinions, but we do take him to task for promulgating them as undisputed and indisputable facts. Until, therefore, it has been conclusively *proved*, not merely *asserted*, that Mr. Greaves did not execute the works which he allowed to be exhibited as his own, he is absolutely entitled to the full measure of merit attached to their production, and anyone who attempts to rob him of even a portion of it is thereby guilty towards him of a very serious injustice.

Whistler's reputation rested, we should have thought, on too solid and long-standing a basis to have been so easily assailable as might have been deduced from Mr. Pennell's rather excited manner of defending it. When, however, account is taken of Mr. Pennell's extreme devotion to the memory of the dead master, we think he is entitled to the fullest allowances possible, whenever he deals with what he may consider injurious to Whistler's fame. But he cannot claim the right to transgress the limits of justice ; and, notwithstanding our willingness to extend to him the fullest indulgence, we find, in endeavouring to understand why he should have made on one of Whistler's acknowledged pupils so keen an attack as that which culminated in the allegations against Mr. Greaves reported in the *New York Times* interview, as great a difficulty as, let us say, it appears he was confronted with over Mr. Greaves's large picture at Streatham Hall. In fact, if he will allow us to borrow the words attributed to him in connection with that much more obvious and concrete point, we could not, in concluding this work, better describe the impression his press campaign has left on us than to say :—

“THERE'S SOME MYSTERY ABOUT THE WHOLE THING.”





## L'Affaire Greaves

By Walter Sickert

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(Reprinted from "*The New Age*" of June 15th, 1911.)

It appears that Mr. Pennell, who has appointed himself official scold to the memory of Whistler, is dissatisfied with some of Mr. Walter Greaves's paintings. Mr. Pennell is an able black-and-white man, an effective etcher and transfer-lithographer, but not, so far as I know, a painter. As a critic he cannot be said to be noted for balance or temperance. I do not therefore find myself disturbed by Mr. Pennell's Constantinopolitan perturbations, or even by Mr. Rowland Strong's entertaining and racy journalism on the same subject in the "*Saturday Review*."

My acquaintance, oddly enough, with Walter Greaves's work dates from the third day of this glorious June. I had heard of the boom, did not believe in it, was bored by it, and told everyone I knew that I was sure it was a *coup monté*, and that there was nothing in it. "Well, that only shows," as we say in England. My friend Mr. Tonks tells me we begin to ossify at eleven, so that at eleven and forty it is no disgrace. I have this in my favour that, while some of my contemporaries are ossified and do not know it, I at least know that I am, and try to allow for it.

When I come to examine the reasons for my hitherto indifference, I find it was due neither to jealousy of a rival "pupil of Whistler" with the same Christian name, nor to a distaste for the appearance of new and sensational men of genius. "*La divine jalousie*" has mercifully been left out of my composition, and as to discovery of genius, that has always been one of my pet hobbies. We must look elsewhere; and I am sorry to say that the fault must lie at the door of my really rather naughty (*lâchons le mot*) master and of my careless credulity in believing him. In effect Whistler gave me to understand that the "Greaves boys" were negligible, that what they accomplished they had from him, and that when his influence was withdrawn they relapsed into the nullity from which he had lifted them for a while. To complete, while I am about it, my evidence on this subject, I must add that Whistler gave me his account of his reasons for breaking with them. His story was this: Whistler had had an exhibition somewhere (don't ask me for dates or places), and after it was over he asked the Greaveses if they had seen it, and they said "No." Act of *lèse-papillon*, and no mistake, here! They made it worse by saying "they didn't mean anything by not going." Worse and

worse! "If you *had meant* anything . . ." Words failed! You see the scene from here. Whistler added that, some time after, a common friend had been to see them, and that they had said that "they were painting pictures on the method of Whistler up to Academy pitch."

My idea on the Greaveses remained ever after at that. I left them at that, with the dangerous fatuousness that is ours when we allow a tag to fill the place that properly belongs to a reality.

However, so far as I am concerned, all's well that ends well. I came, I saw, and was bowled over, and herewith make publicly act of penitence. Walter Greaves is a great master. Henry doesn't count. Walter announces himself with an immense painting of Hammersmith bridge on Boatrace day, a work of extreme youth. Simon Bussy once told me an enchanting story: A painter, entering the studio of a colleague, is so struck with the work on the easel that he seizes it and rushes to the door with it. "*Malheureux, où allez vous avec mon tableau ?*" "*Au Louvre !*" To the National Gallery with Hammersmith Bridge! But I forgot, Mr. Greaves is only a great painter, and the graduate of no University. The boatman's son "*aura difficile à entrer,*" as the Norman fishermen say. (Turner, by the way, was a barber's son.)

The Hammersmith picture is a masterpiece. The only thing that it reminds me of in painting is Carpaccio. It is a staggerer. Its perfect naïveté results in purest art. Curiously enough I should say it must have been done on a white tempera ground, though Mr. Greaves says not. I think he must have forgotten. Let any one look at number (27), "The Thames, bright morning," "Unloading the barge" (35), "Mountebanks, Chelsea" (39), "The Old Haymarket" (40), "Lawrence Street, Chelsea" (48), "Cremorne Gardens at night, showing the entrance to the theatre and the stooping Venus fountain," "The Boating-pond, Battersea Park," "Battersea Church" (70), and "Old Chelsea and the Adam and Eve," and say that here is not a little master in the first rank. In the portrait of Miss Alice Greaves, Walter Greaves has accomplished what Whistler spent his life trying to do. It is odd, tragic, humorous, *cocasse*, anything you like, that it should be so, but there it is. The ways of providence are inscrutable. The boatman's son is the great gentleman. The humble and meek have scored in this dramatic manner, as they have scored before, and as they will probably score again to the end of time. "Au Louvre" with Tinny Greaves!

Now the reader will ask, What about the Whistler influence? What especially, about the Greaves Nocturnes? Of the bulk it may be said that here was a fine artistic personality deflected from time to time from its orbit. Greaves did many Whistlerian nocturnes, not one of which could be mistaken by a connoisseur for a Whistler nocturne. Whistler, trained in Paris, taught and influenced Greaves, Greaves, the professional armorial painter and boatman, inspired Whistler and suggested subjects to him.



To be dragged out of your orbit round the town, like a tin kettle at the tail of a dog, by a stronger personality may appear to the unphilosophical experience merely painful. The truly philosophical kettle returns, dented, it is true, but enriched by, and grateful for, ecstatic experience. If in Old Battersea Bridge (69) Greaves had caught badly the slippery strip touch which was Whistler's worst fault, in The Balcony (41) we have an august nocturne with a quality of intricate and monumental design that Whistler never reached. Any nagging about mutual indebtedness is sordid and trivial in such a case. It is as if two lovers should quibble under the bough of a lime-tree about which of them it was that made the other happy.

As to the difficulties and surprises of identification, I have only to run over a short list of facts in my own experience to see how easily they may arise. I painted a small panel of Duret while Whistler painted his large portrait. The panel was exhibited at Suffolk Street. I think I gave it to Menpes. I painted a sketch of the blue girl, actually taking the mixtures off Whistler's palette. A friend of mine has a little panel of a model which I painted, not very well, and which Whistler finished, with some exquisite passages in a lace dress and velvet curtain. I etched a plate from Stephen Manuel while he was sitting to Whistler. My etching was good for me, being done in once, Whistler's portrait was bad for him. He was not quick enough for the child, who was wearied with the number of sittings. I remember I told Whistler a theory I had that when two people painted from the same thing, the bogey of success sat on one or the other, but not on both palettes. Whistler took up and nearly finished a portrait of Mrs. Walter Cave which I had planned and begun. This one also was lost. I painted another of the same arrangement, and exhibited it at the New English. While Whistler was painting Miss Barr's portrait in my studio in Robert Street I did a very complete pencil drawing, which Robert Barr still has. Whistler's painting was lost or stolen. My drawing may some day serve to identify it, if ever it turns up. When Professor Brown was appointed to the Slade, either I drew a head of him for an apologia that McColl wrote in a magazine and it was published as by Steer, or Steer drew it and it was published as by me. I forget which. I did a drawing of Beardsley in an armchair in Cambridge Street. A German collector cherishes it as a Beardsley, and when Arthur Symons pointed out that "Sickert" was written in the corner, the German authorities said: "Ah! yes, we know; but Beardsley wrote that to indicate that he was ill, was at his sickest." If these things occur in our own lifetime, who can wonder at the difficulty posthumous experts find in details of attribution? As to Whistlers and Whistleriana, I am perhaps the person living who is most qualified to speak, and that is why I have been at the pains to write this article.



"OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE, MOONLIGHT"

(This picture was painted by Mr. Walter Greaves in May, 1911)





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## POSTSCRIPT.

Comments and Rectifications necessitated by certain Statements concerning Mr. Walter Greaves and his Exhibition, which have been introduced into the "New and Revised Edition" of the *Life of James McNeill Whistler*, by E. R. & J. Pennell.

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While the preceding pages were in the printers' hands, Mr. William Heinemann brought out the New and Revised Edition—the Fifth—of *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*, by E. R. and J. Pennell.

In the Publisher's Note it is said that "much new material has come into the hands of the authors, and a complete revision of the book has therefore become necessary." Some of this new material refers to Mr. Walter Greaves, and to the Exhibition which we held of his works.

As the official biography of any great man, by its very nature, is called to rank as an historical document, one had a right to expect that, when revising their work after the fourth edition, the authors would have treated the Greaves question with the most scrupulous accuracy, not only on account of the rather heated controversy to which it had given rise, but also and especially because one of these authors, Mr. Joseph Pennell, had been both the instigator and the protagonist of the opposition.

It is therefore with great regret that we find it necessary to single out certain statements introduced into this "New and Revised Edition," and to append thereto the necessary comments or rectifications.

We will take them in the order of their importance, distinguishing them by letters to facilitate reference, and indicating in underlined italics the pages on which they are to be found.

### A.—*Pages 64-65.*

"Walter Greaves stated, or allowed to be stated, in a preface to the catalogue of his exhibition in May, 1911, that he met Whistler in the late fifties, when Whistler lived in Chelsea and made the Thames series of etchings. But the statement was proved to be inaccurate, and the preface was withdrawn."

Mr. Greaves's actual words in the Prefatory Letter were:—

". . . Whistler, whose acquaintance I made in the late fifties . . . It was at Lindsey Row that he . . . produced his Thames and other etchings of that period." (*Italics ours.*)

The inference one would naturally draw from statement A, is that the preface was withdrawn in consequence of the proved inaccuracy of Mr. Greaves's statement; whereas we withdrew the preface—as we distinctly said in our letters to *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Star* (pages 18, 24, and 28), and as Mr. and Mrs. Pennell must have perfectly well known—because we had found that the picture, "*Passing Under Old Battersea Bridge*," was exhibited in 1873, and not in 1862 as erroneously

surmised and stated by Mr. Greaves. Therefore the withdrawal had nothing to do with anything contained in statement A. Moreover, the preface was withdrawn on May 25th, i.e., *the day before* Mr. Heinemann's letter appeared in *The Times*; and Mr. Heinemann was the only one to deal with any rectification on this point, which he did in the following words:—

“ Mr. Greaves says that Whistler's Thames etchings were produced when he lived at Lindsey Row; but most of them are dated 1859—two or three years before he went there.”

Whatever actual meaning Mr. Greaves may have wished to convey by using the word *produce*, he can no more be held to have said that Whistler produced *all* his Thames etchings at Lindsey Row, than Mr. Heinemann can be accused of having stated that Whistler produced *none* while he lived there.

That 1859 was by no means the last year in which Whistler produced etchings of the Thames series is proved by no lesser authorities than his official biographers, who say in the revised edition, *page 65*,

“ In 1861 there were more plates of the Upper as well as the Lower Thames.

Whistler told us that he worked about three weeks on each of the Thames plates. He therefore must have spent on dated plates alone thirty-six weeks in 1861.”

so that *at least* twelve Thames plates were produced in 1861, *viz.*, two years after Mr. Heinemann's date.

In vain have we searched through the letters of Mr. Pennell and Mr. Heinemann for any proof that Mr. Greaves did not make Whistler's acquaintance in the late fifties. We therefore have a right to ask: When was Mr. Greaves's statement on that point “proved to be inaccurate”?

#### **B.**—*Page 77.*

“ Walter Greaves, in his exhibition of 1911, made the statement, or allowed it to be made, that before he and his brother knew Whistler, they were ‘painting pictures of the Thames and Crémorne Gardens, both day and night effects.’ This statement Mr. Greaves was unable to substantiate by dates and facts, and as other dates and facts given in his catalogue were wrong, little reliance can be placed upon it.”

Mr. Greaves was never so much as asked to substantiate the statement. Mr. Heinemann, in his letter to *The Times* (p. 16) did attempt to traverse it by quoting, from a letter from Whistler to Mr. Greaves, that he (Whistler) was the inventor of his manner of painting “Moonlights,” afterwards called “Nocturnes.” We thought we had sufficiently pointed out in our reply (p. 19) the *non sequitur* of Mr. Heinemann's argument.

If Mr. Heinemann or Mr. Pennell had *proved* that neither Mr. Greaves nor his brother had ever painted, as they stated, before they knew Whistler, and Mr. Greaves had been unable to substantiate his assertion, then and then only could there have been the slightest justification for statement B. But let us requote Mr. Greaves's sentence in its entirety:

“ Before we knew Whistler, my brother and I were painting pictures of the Thames and Crémorne Gardens, both day and night effects, but we had been so accustomed to fill our pictures with numerous details that, when we came under Whistler's influence and teaching, his ideas naturally appeared to us strange at first, and difficult to carry out.”



It is more than curious to note how all reference to the latter portion of Mr. Greaves's sentence has been systematically omitted throughout this controversy. If readers of "The New and Revised Edition" of *The Life of James McNeill Whistler* were to follow the authors' method of generalising from particulars, as exemplified in statement B, what reliance would they be led to place upon that biography?

**C.—Page 77.**

"He [Whistler] also did his best to prevent Mr. Walter Greaves and his brother from appropriating his subjects, which letters from Whistler to Greaves prove was exactly what they were doing."

This, of course, constitutes an allegation which the authors should never have made without substantiating it by quoting the necessary passages from the letters in question. The same source from which Mr. Heinemann was able to obtain his extract from Whistler's letter, in order to use it against Mr. Greaves, must surely be also available in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Pennell. In all honour and justice, therefore, they are now bound to supply the deficiency.

We can state, from our personal knowledge, that the extract in Mr. Heinemann's letter to *The Times* has produced in many quarters, rightly or wrongly, the strong impression that Whistler was jealous of his pupils. That impression will most probably receive a regrettable impetus from Mr. and Mrs. Pennell's reiteration of the point.

It is, of course, common knowledge that Whistler was extremely sensitive on the question of his subjects and titles, as may be seen on page 4, Vol. II., 1st to 4th editions, of the *Life of James McNeill Whistler*, in Mr. Frederick Keppel's vivid description of Whistler's repudiation of Mr. Pennell in the early eighties:

" 'I remember every word of my colloquy with Whistler about yourself. It took place at his apartments, Tite Street, Chelsea. I had casually mentioned your name, when Whistler said in a dry and careless way, 'I don't know him.'—'Joseph Pennell,' I answered.—'Never heard of him!' said Whistler.—'Why, hang it,' said I, 'you know him perfectly well,—Joseph Pennell, the artist!'—'Oh!' said Whistler, '*that* man. I once knew him but I don't know him now. He had the audacity to appropriate the title of *Little Venice* to one of his etchings; now that title belongs to me. No, I don't know him at all.' "

This passage is expunged from the *New and Revised Edition*, which on account of several other excisions, might almost have had the word *Expurgated* added to its title. Again, the sentence referring to Walter and Harry Greaves, which ran as follows on page 107, Vol. I., 1st to 4th editions:

"We have often heard him speak of them as his 'first pupils,' "

is reduced (*page 76, Revised Edition*) to

"We have often heard him speak of them as his pupils"

and we are now told, *page 65*, that it was

"M. W. Ridley, who was Whistler's first pupil."

No explanation, "charitable" or otherwise, is vouchsafed for this important *post mortem* correction of what, according to the authors, was Whistler's own statement to them as to who were his *first* pupils.

In Chapter VII., page 49, we quoted Mr. and Mrs. Pennell as having thus commented on Mr. Greaves's description to them of Whistler's method of painting his "Moonlights":—

"And so it happens that, of the methods and materials of few other modern painters, is there so accurate a record as of Whistler's when he painted the Nocturnes."

Whilst Mr. Greaves's record of the methods is reprinted entirely in the Revised Edition, it is no longer accompanied by the authors' favourable comment upon it, as given above.

**D.—Page 77.**

"They were to carry on his tradition, and this included his methods and even at times his colours which they used, while Whistler as undoubtedly worked on their canvases and plates as he worked on those of other pupils at later dates."

The "tradition" must have also included his own subjects, as shown by Whistler himself, when—referring to his "moonlights"—he wrote to the brothers Greaves: "Nothing more natural than that you two should do them, and quite right that the traditions of the studio should go on through the pupils." Even if Whistler had "undoubtedly worked on their canvases and plates," that fact would neither justify Mr. Pennell's allegations to the London Correspondent of the *New York Times* (page 35), nor debar Whistler's pupils, including Mr. Greaves, from calling such works their own.

**E.—Page 77.**

"But the statement that he refused to allow them to exhibit is untrue, for on the few occasions when we are able to find that Greaves did exhibit, it was because Whistler, in his generosity, got the pictures hung."

Of course this "statement" is untrue and Mr. Pennell knows perfectly well that Mr. Greaves never made it. We wonder how many more *statements* of a like nature are refuted in this *Revised Edition*.

Whistler did *not*, at all events, get Mr. Greaves's pictures hung at the Aquarium in 1876 (see footnote, page 25). Mr. Greaves was the first to acknowledge Whistler's good offices in his behalf: first, in connection with his Battersea Bridge picture at the International Exhibition—although he mistook the date of 1862 for that of 1873—and secondly, with reference to his portrait of "Tinnie," which, as he said, Whistler "tried to get in at the Grosvenor," though Mr. Pennell, for some reason or other, was willing to doubt this latter statement (page 27, near bottom). Mr. Alan Cole said that he showed in 1874, at Whistler's request, a "Harmony in White and Grey," by H. Greaves\*, which brings up to three—1873, 1874, 1876—the "few occasions" of which we have records when pictures by the brothers Greaves had been exhibited: twice, through Whistler's mediation; once, against his desire.

Yet, what impression could N.N. have wished to produce when he, or she, wrote (page 37):

"And the obscurity of Walter Greaves is purely a myth. From 1873, he exhibited publicly."?

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\* It was no small compliment from Whistler to his pupils, the brothers Greaves, and recognition of their capabilities, when he chose, for the exhibition of their pictures, musical titles similar to those which he had then only been using a year or two for his own works



**F.—Page 77.**

"In his recent exhibition Greaves showed a painting called *Passing under Old Battersea Bridge*, signed and dated 1862, and he stated that he had exhibited it in the International Exhibition at South Kensington of that year. No other picture we have seen by him has any such date or signature on it, and his statement that it was in the International Exhibition of 1862 has been proved false. It is now admitted that he did not show until 1873."

Whilst making no comment on the question of actual facts, we would plainly ask whether that is the kind of language which should be used when dealing with what has universally been accepted as a mere slip of memory? We can see but one impression likely to be conveyed by it, viz., that Mr. Greaves had deliberately desired to deceive the public, but had been found out.

**G.—Page 77.**

"There are two distinct qualities of work in the picture which must be the work either of two people or of two periods. The piers of the bridge are hard and tight, the background resembles Whistler's work of years later, for neither Whistler nor Greaves had painted a Nocturne in that manner at the time."

How different in tone from the two following proclamations addressed to the people of the United States!—

"Mr Pennell declares that there is intrinsic evidence that it was Whistler's hand that painted the background of barges which is the chief feature of the Greaves picture of Battersea Bridge.—*New York Times*, May 24th, 1911.

and

".....Passing Under Old Battersea Bridge, obviously derived from Whistler, though the distant sky and water were undoubtedly painted by him, as anyone can see, but at a much later date, and some of the reflections in the river were also put in by Whistler."—N.N. in *The Nation*, June 8th, 1911.

**H.—Page 65.**

"We have quoted Greaves on several occasions, but, before doing so, we have verified every statement of importance he made to us, and we first met him some few years ago when his memory was clearer and more reliable, and when he possessed letters from Whistler which we have seen."

If the letters from Whistler corroborated Mr. Greaves's statements, how much better it would have been to quote them as authorities! If they did not, what have they to do with Mr. Greaves's memory?

The authors do not say whether their verifications were made before the *original* edition, or only before the *revised* one. It is a pity, considering the slur they have passed on Mr. Greaves's memory, that they did not indicate which are the verified statements, or that they allowed any unverified ones to remain in the book.

However, Mr. Greaves may smilingly wonder how the authors managed to verify some of his statements; whilst we cannot refrain from admiring their diplomatic management of Mr. Greaves's memory, so as to reassure the public that all is well, at all events, with their own wares.

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There is every reason why all the editions of the *Life of James McNeill Whistler* should contain nothing but accurate statements about Whistler and his works; there can be no excuse for the introduction into the *New and Revised Edition* of a single misstatement concerning Mr. Greaves or ourselves.













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